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Foreword

AS THE election approaches, it will become increasingly difficult to see through the smoke screens rising from the camps of both major parties. The land will be blanketed by propaganda and deluged with statements too absurd to be taken seriously by anyone who could graduate from kindergarten. Before the darkness becomes complete, it is well to fix the issues in mind: they will serve as guideposts when all else is chaos.

There are really three principal issues which, in simple terms, can be described as the economic issue, the legal issue, and the ethical issue.

Recovery could be used as an alternative name for the first. It is only natural to find that the Administration, emulating King Canute, claims credit for it. No one with eyes and common sense can deny that in March 1933, American business was as sick as it could be and that during the intervening three and a half years its health has been restored to a considerable extent.

Yet you cannot measure anything in terms of itself; there must always be a yardstick. American recovery must be considered in terms of world recovery. If our experience is better than that of the majority of other countries, our Government must be given special credit, but if our experience has not been above average, it is fair to conclude that we have merely ridden on the eco-

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nomic tides, whose force and direction some future generation may learn to understand.

The cost of recovery must, in like manner, be set up against the cost of recovery elsewhere. If it was possible for England to regain its economic equilibrium without a seriously unbalanced budget, was it necessary for us, in order to achieve the same objective, to double the national debt?

The nature of recovery should be considered from a social or humanitarian point of view. Legislation such as the National Recovery Act and the Social Security Act, by hindering the heavy industries, preserves unemployment on its most tenaciously held ground. Furthermore, these policies and their allies, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, the Potato Act, the Guffy Act, and the Robinson-Patman Act, have served to increase the cost of producing food and manufactured goods — the cost of living. The nature of recovery has been something short of idyllic to the housewife whose income has remained static or has declined with interest rates, while rents and the prices of bread, meat and clothing were rising steadily.

The legal issue, while of less concrete concern than the economic, is of deeper and more lasting significance. In briefest terms, the question at issue is whether the Constitution, mostly written one hundred and fifty years ago for a small, homogeneous and agrarian community, has become outmoded. This issue has been dramatized by the clash between the New Deal and the Supreme Court.

The Constitution, it must be remembered, is a pact between a group of sovereign states. Legally, this situation remains unchanged; but has our basic law become unsuited to the economic and social life of America to-

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day? Apparently the school of thought led by Felix Frankfurter and Rexford Tugwell believes, in all sincerity, that this is so: whereas Governor Landon and his associates maintain that the Constitution continues to provide an adequate framework for the Federal Government.

We have had a sample of what the anti-Constitutionalists would give us in Mr. Tugwell's Resettlement Administration, Mr. Hopkins' Public Works Administration, and Mr. Farley's Post Office. The issue was crystallized a century ago by Jefferson's comment: "In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution."

The legal issue may be decided at this election, at the next, or not for many years. The economic issue will be dissipated by the forces of time. The ethical issue will last exactly as long as the present Administration, because it concerns the character of one man, the President. Of all the issues, it will cause the most bitterness, and is the least susceptible of clear analysis. Its nature is such that the opposition has a natural advantage which it will probably abuse; it is always easier to throw mud than to defend past actions.

The question at issue is whether the President has performed the duties of his office in a manner which qualifies him for reëlection.

In order to answer this question it is necessary clearly to understand what the duties of the office are. On this point the Constitution, our basic law, is fairly explicit. Article II is devoted entirely to explaining and defining the powers, restraints, and duties of the President. "Before he enter on the execution of his office", the Constitution states, "he shall take the following oath or affirmation: — 'I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faith-

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fully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.'" He is the commander in chief of the army and navy. With the advice and consent of the Senate, he is empowered to make treaties, appoint ambassadors, ministers, judges of the Supreme Court, and such other officers of the United States as are not otherwise provided for by the Constitution or by Congress. "He shall from time to time give the Congress information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." He can convene and adjourn both Houses. "He shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and shall commission all the officers of the United States."

There is not much room for confusion. The duty of the President is to uphold the Constitution and to execute the wishes of the people, as expressed through their representatives, provided they are not in conflict with the Constitution. The power to "recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient" has been interpreted very broadly, and has given many of the Presidents a lever enabling them to influence, if not to direct, the course of legislation. Jefferson, who broke the back of the first Federalist movement, performed, as President, one of the broadest acts of imperialism in world history when he bought Louisiana from Napoleon — and told Congress about it afterwards. Jackson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt each took legislative initiative into his own hands, stretching the "recommending" clause almost beyond recognition. Nevertheless, no President before Franklin Roosevelt urged upon Congress passage of legislation regardless of

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its constitutionality. By so doing, the President has created an issue which will influence many votes; for there are those who believe that this constitutes a breach of faith, while others will applaud the action.

No one can forecast the reaction of the electorate to a question of ethics, but the issue has been raised and may help to determine the course of history. As Franklin Roosevelt said in September, 1932, "But remember well, that attitude and method — the way we do things — is nearly always the measure of our sincerity."

* * * * *

Richard Dana Skinner, who has been Associate Editor, has resigned from his editorial position in order to devote the equivalent time to the completion of his new book on "American Horizons." He will continue, however, to send us articles from time to time, and may, we hope, resume his editorial connection at a not too distant date.

* * * * *

We are pleased to announce that Joseph Auslander, whose latest book of poetry "More Than Bread" will be published by Macmillan this autumn, has joined our staff as Associate Editor. The poems of Elizabeth Bohm which appear in this number are the first of a series, chosen by Mr. Auslander, of selections of the work of American poets of outstanding promise.

J. P.

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Labor Bewitched

CAL LEWIS

Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire, burn; and, caldron, bubble.
— "Macbeth"

THE CALDRON of American labor, into which have been flung "wool of bat, and tongue of dog, adder's fork and blind-worm's sting," is merrily boiling, sending its intoxicating vapors north, south, east and west. Its mist has settled thickly over Washington, bewitching the New Dealers with a Hecate spell that has caused them to formulate frantically strange potions and alphabetical sesames. Grandest of all was the NRA, hailed as an elixir that would, if taken in large and ample doses, make America a labor garden of Eden. But that soured in the labor witches' caldron when the U. S. Supreme Court, following precedents that have been the guiding law of the land for nearly half a century, declared that the "fillet of fenny snake" in the stew could not be stomached by the American people and that the very odor of it nauseated American sensibilities.

But in three years — long to some, short to others — the caldron has yielded other concoctions. One is the Social Security Act, which proposes to take nine per cent of the payrolls of industrial workers (six per cent for old age pensions and three per cent for unemployment insurance) and put the proceeds into a fifty billion dollar pool of government bonds. Curiously, the lowest classes of workers are outside the magic circle of the Social Security Act. Farm workers, domestic servants, and other groups, will receive no benefits under the law. Economic wizards of the old school regard the Social

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Security Act as the quintessence of legerdemain, built on a false theory of wealth and its accumulation.

Other brews of the caldron are the National Labor Relations Board, the Wagner Collective Bargaining Act and the LaFollette Law, which is a sort of labor Mann Act, forbidding a manufacturer to hire a workman in another state if there is a strike in his factory. Under that law, a manufacturer is as immoral as the procurer who transports prostitutes across state lines. These laws attempt to tie the hands of a manufacturer with several thongs to make him less able to resist the demands of organized labor.

Both of the major political parties have been watching intently the boiling of the labor caldron. The Democrats have found the potions to their liking, and in the labor plank in their recently adopted platform have promised to make "the gruel thick and slab." Around the caldron they are exhorting: "For a charm of powerful trouble, like a hell-broth boil and bubble."

The Republicans, scenting without difficulty the strong odors that are arising from the labor caldron, beholding an eager group ready to put more ingredients into the kettle — "eye of newt, and toe of frog" — and finding neither the present odorous vapors nor the impending additions to their liking, have carefully swept and polished their party platform, and are frantically waving their broomsticks at the witches. "The right of labor to organize," said Governor Landon in his acceptance speech, "means to me the right of employees to join any type of union that they prefer, whether it covers their plant, their craft or their industry. It means that, in the absence of a union contract, an employee has an equal right to join a union or to refuse to join a union."

Thus Governor Landon refuses to outlaw the principle

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of the open shop, which for many decades has been vigorously fought by organized labor, and which has been subjected to many attacks by the NRA, the Labor Relations Board and other governmental agencies. "Under all circumstances, so states the Republican platform, employees are to be free from interference from any source," continued Governor Landon, "which means, as I read it, coercion or intimidation by the employer, any fellow employee or any other person."

The Presidential candidate takes the stand that workers shall not be forced to join a union and that "company unions" have a right to exist. The steel industry, for example, is strongly organized into company unions, and will put up a vigorous fight to prevent workers of steel plants from being lured away. Organized labor wants to overthrow these company unions and to draw the workers into the union tent. The coming battle in the steel industry may have great influence upon the future of labor, politics, and even the American system of government.

Even before Governor Landon had delivered his acceptance speech, John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers and chairman of the Committee for Industrial Organization George L. Berry, President Roosevelt's labor co-ordinator and head of that strange organization, Labor's Non-Partisan League, and Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, had secured advance copies of the Landon acceptance speech and issued rebuttal statements to the newspapers for release simultaneously with the governor's acceptance speech. Lewis cried that the Republican nominee is espousing a doctrine that would prevent union labor from organizing an unorganized plant or industry. Berry said that Landon is championing company unions. Hillman

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asserted that Landon is "the candidate of the National Association of Manufacturers" and that "such a policy would preclude organization except where workers spontaneously acted, and every laboring man knows that this policy, if applied, would freeze the movement to organize American labor."

Thus, if the Republican platform and the governor's ideas of some of the issues are vague, as has been contended by some newspaper editors, they are certainly not hazy on labor. The Republicans would chase away the witches who have been concocting such labor potions as the famous (or infamous, depending upon your point of view) Section 7-a of the NRA, which incorporated into the law of the land the principle that labor unions could coerce workers into joining their unions, but that manufacturers could not raise their arms in defense against encroachments of labor. The Republicans would dump out the labor caldron, scour it with alkali and fill it with something less ominous than "scale of dragon, tooth of wolf."

In the past labor has not been an overwhelming issue in presidential campaigns, but because the cabalistic New Deal of the Democrats has been largely an apotheosis of labor, with ends to be reached by any means whatsoever, labor has become a pivotal issue of the campaign. The Democrats, it is believed by many, are warping the Constitution by such measures as the NRA, the Social Security Act, the Guffey Coal Act, in order to give special advantages to organized labor, which constitutes less than ten per cent of the total workers in the country. If the Democrats are returned to power there is no telling, believe their opponents, where the New Deal suppressed labor desires will lead them during a second term.

We have been speaking of labor as though it were a

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homogeneous movement, as, for example, Christian Science, or the Oxford Movement. That is not true. There are three general sections, or divisions, of American labor: (1) the craft unions, (2) the industrial unions, and (3) the works councils, or company unions. The number of workers in each division is roughly in the neighborhood of two million. The craft unions are the oldest labor organizations in the country and are formed along craft lines. In a plant, the carpenters will belong to one union: the machinists, to another. They are horizontal unions. The industrial unions, whose greatest strength lies in the clothing and the mining industries, include all the workers in a plant or in an industry. Craft distinctions are obliterated. They are vertical unions. During the third quarter of the last century, industrial unions were the leading labor organizations in the United States: but their power crumbled and their place was largely taken by the craft unions.

The third type of labor organization, known as company unionism, is represented by loose and independent organizations which extend to single plants, or single companies. In these organizations, known as works councils, committees of workers meet with management to settle disputes and to improve working conditions. Unlike the unions in organized labor, company unions are not affiliated and do not aid each other in strikes. They add no "root of hemlock digged in the dark" to the labor caldron. Since many company unions have been formed with the aid and approval of the plant operators, and since they give no financial or other support to the general labor movement, they are regarded as a bastard form of unionism by organized labor. That thought is shared by the New Dealers. In Section 7-a of the now defunct NRA, it was required that "no employee and no one

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seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union." The law, however, freely allowed unions to make membership in their organizations a condition for employment. What is sauce for the labor goose is not sauce for the "economic royalist" gander!

The leading organization in the labor field is, and has been for nearly half a century, the American Federation of Labor. Originally formed by craft unions when the industrial unions of the last century were crumbling, it has in recent years taken into its membership more and more industrial unions, until now a third or more of its total membership consists of men and women in industrial unions. The craft unions are, in general, conservative and fairly content with their economic lot. The industrial unions, on the other hand, especially those in the large cities composed chiefly of foreign born workers, are restless, radical and crusading in their ideals. To them labor unionism is not only a means to secure better wages and working conditions, but it is a cause to live and fight for. They want all the workers in the country to be organized, and organized in their particular brand of unionism. In them the social philosophy of internationalism and communism is strong. The craft workers are the right wing, the industrial workers are the left wing of the American labor movement. It is significant to thinking Americans that the labor standards of the New Deal have been carried by the left wing leaders.

With this brief summary of the set-up of labor in the United States, let us again turn our attention to the caldron. We find it boiling, hissing, with the three witches dancing merrily about. In "Macbeth" the three witches were nameless. But that shall not be the fate of our labor witches. The labor witches in the New Deal drama that

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is unfolding itself are: Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers and head of the Committee for Industrial Organization, whose efforts to organize the steel industry threaten to make the kettle boil over, and Senator Robert F. Wagner, of New York.

The goddess of magic, Hecate, is none other than smiling Franklin D. Roosevelt, who enters, examines the work of the lesser spirits, and speaks in his grand Shakespearean manner:

> O, well done! I commend your pains,
> And every one shall share i' the gains.

These three witches have long garnered fuel for the fire and ingredients for the magic labor kettle. Senator Wagner, born of poor Jewish parents in Germany in 1877, came to this land of opportunity at an early age, and after studying law, became deeply interested in labor and politics. He was first elected to the New York Assembly in 1905 and since has been continuously in public service. He is the intellectual head of the New Deal labor activities. He is the chief author of the NRA, the Social Security Act and other New Deal labor measures. He was chairman of the National Labor Board in 1933 and 1934. It was Senator Wagner who wrote the labor and social millennium planks in the Democratic platform. He was the President's steersman at the Philadelphia convention. Schooled in the radical labor conditions of New York City, Senator Wagner has developed a social philosophy revolving about labor that is anathema to industrialists throughout the country.

Not so polished, but perhaps more suave, is the second witch, Sidney Hillman. It is he, probably more than any other person, who is twisting the tail of the American Federation of Labor in the present dispute over organiza-

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tion of the steel industry. His is the master mind in the left wing in the federation.

Hillman was also born of poor Jewish parents, not in Germany, but in Russia. He came to this country in 1906 and first achieved prominence as a youthful leader in the Chicago clothing strike in 1910. In New York he was active the following year in a series of clothing strikes in New York City, which were settled with the factory operators by the United Garment Workers. The terms of the settlement were unsatisfactory to a large group of workers and Hillman was selected chairman of the dissenting faction. In 1914, he broke away from the United Garment Workers and organized the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, an industrial union. The American Federation of Labor refused to recognize the new organization. This did not disturb Hillman greatly, and he soon built up his union to the point where it completely dominated the men's clothing industry in the large cities. It was Hillman who set up a system in Chicago, and later in New York City, in which employers and workers contribute to a joint unemployment fund. The same basic idea is contained in the Social Security Act.

The clothing workers in New York and Chicago are for the most part radical in aims, swinging farthest to the left of any laboring groups in the United States. A substantial part of them are foreign born and they have carried along with them the revolutionary ideas from the countries of origin. The constitution of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers contains this philosophy:

> The industrial and inter-industrial organization, built upon the solid rock of organization and class consciousness, will put the working class in actual control of the system of production and the working class will then be ready to take possession of it.

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After the war, huge sums of money, estimated at several million dollars, were raised in Hillman's union to buy machinery to send to Russia for the establishment of clothing factories in that communist state.

With the advent of the New Deal Hillman was given a position of honor in official circles with seats on the National Industrial Recovery Board and the Labor Advisory Board. That he has had an important part in shaping the labor policies of the New Deal cannot be doubted. The fact that the clothing industry was organized to operate its code some time before the Recovery Act was passed by Congress indicates the alertness of the Amalgamated.

In 1934 the Hillman organization, formerly an outlaw, was taken into the membership of the American Federation of Labor, thus adding considerable strength to the left wing of that organization.

The third witch beside the labor caldron is spectacular, dramatic, front-man John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America. He also is held in high repute in New Deal circles, and is the spearhead of the radical left wing of the industrial unionists of the American Federation of Labor. Born of Welsh parents in the United States, Lewis from early boyhood was active in labor. The organization that he heads was formed in 1890 by Eugene V. Debs, the great socialist labor leader. Its great strike of 1902 in the Pennsylvania anthracite fields, involved one hundred and forty-seven thousand men and lasted five months. So threatening was the situation that President Theodore Roosevelt called a conference and induced the contestants to submit their difficulties to an arbitration commission, which awarded the miners shorter hours and increased wages.

John L. Lewis is an aggressive, spotlight-loving spirit,

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and by tradition and inclination falls in easily with Sidney Hillman and others in the attempt to "liberalize" the American Federation of Labor. Like other leaders in industrial unionism, he looks for new fields to conquer for the great cause. He finds fault with the slow progress of the federation in unionizing the steel, automobile, and other mass production industries. He proceeds to go forward with his Committee for Industrial Organization with little regard for William Green, conservative president of the federation. The inevitable friction follows in the clashing of leftist and rightist ideals, and the result may be that organized labor will divide into two independent organizations — the craft and the industrial unions.

The New Deal is keeping an anxious eye on the labor kettle as it sputters from the activities of the Hillman, Lewis, and other industrial unions in the steel industry. Every effort will be made to prevent an open split between the right and the left wings of labor before the election, for the New Deal is counting heavily on its labor vote to return it for a second term. But whether the break takes place before or after election, it appears to be inevitable. The Hillman-Lewis bloc of industrial unions is ready to go forward with its efforts to unionize the steel industry, federation or no federation. If Roosevelt is re-elected and the New Deal aids it against the "steel royalists," the fight will be long and bitter, nation-wide in its influence. If the bloc should accomplish industrial unionization of the industry, profound changes may result in American labor and politics.

Although the New Deal is undoubtedly sympathetic to the cause of the radical industrial unionists, it must at the present time preserve an air of neutrality: otherwise it might divorce itself from many votes of the rightest

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unions. If Roosevelt is again elected, there seems to be little question that the leftist unions will be in the supremacy, either within the federation or without it. If the New Deal is given another four years of life, the crusade of the radical labor unionist will become bold. We may expect to have bigger and better NRAs and Wagner Acts. Who can predict what will go in and what will come out of the labor caldron in four long years? Speculation is rife, and many rumors are afloat. Phil G. Hanna, editor of the Chicago Journal of Commerce, in a recent address before the Montana Bankers' Association, made the assertion that President Roosevelt would support John L. Lewis for the presidency in 1940! That seems incredible, but there are strange goings-on in labor and politics.

A curious development on the labor front is the formation of Labor's Non-Partisan League, headed by George L. Berry, President Roosevelt's labor co-ordinator. The ticket of this group in New York State will be Roosevelt for president and Lehman for governor. (Lehman is an outstanding supporter of the New Deal labor philosophy.) Does this presage that, if all goes well, we shall have a labor political party in 1940? Ostensibly, the "Non-Partisan" league's activities in New York will center on capturing about a quarter of a million votes of radical labor which under other circumstances might go to Socialist or Communist candidates.

The leftist swing of New Deal labor policies is explainable, if not understandable. President Roosevelt, Senator Wagner, Secretary of Labor Perkins, Sidney Hillman, and many of the satellites of the New Deal received their labor education by observation of the clothing industry in New York City. Practically all of them in their speeches hark back to such happenings as

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the Triangle Shirt Waist factory fire, in which a number of workers lost their lives. Yet the New York clothing industry is not typical of the American system. In New York a great part of the work is carried out on the contract system. The cloth is cut and the pieces sent out for fabrication in homes or in poorly lighted, poorly ventilated lofts of sub-contractors. Few clothing manufacturers in New York operate their factories. Any attempt to make it a yardstick of American labor conditions, as apparently the New Deal has tried, is fallacious. In the light of recent developments, it appears possible that the New Dealers are beginning to realize that fact.

Anyone interested in how union leftists act when they have the power of an NRA behind them should read the hearings on the administration of the Men's Clothing Code last year before the Senate Finance Committee (Senate Resolution seventy-nine). The Amalgamated Clothing Workers union dominated the code, and the manufacturers and the workers in the contract center in the large cities. A strong drive was made against clothing factories operating on the American factory system outside the large urban centers, and if the end of the NRA had not stopped the warfare, dozens of factories would have been driven out of business. No terrorism of the Old World could have exceeded that of the administration of the men's clothing code. There is probably not one in a thousand American citizens who has any knowledge of that conflict. Yet there is danger that it may again be repeated. Most of us have read Sinclair Lewis' book, "It Can't Happen Here," but how many of us have any understanding or knowledge of what actually has been happening here?

During the past quarter of a century, the lot of the working man in the United States has greatly improved.

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Working conditions are better, wages are higher, and hours are shorter. Though temporarily halted by the depression, there is no reason why progress should not continue in the future. Workers in the United States are better off than those in any other country of the world. In our savings banks is the colossal sum of $42,000,000,000, an average savings capital of $1,500 per family. If a substantial part of those savings, instead of being hoarded, were taken out and spent on clothes, automobiles, food, radios and furniture, our unemployment problem would be solved and the wheels of industry would whirr with activity.

Labor in the United States is moving along three fronts — the craft unions, the industrial unions and the company unions. The craft and the industrial unions, receiving no benefits from the company unions, are bitterly opposed to company unionism. The present agitation in the steel industry consists in a joint fight of the craft and industrial unions against the steel company unions, with the craft and the industrial unions squabbling over how the company unions will be exterminated. That struggle threatens to split the federation open.

Despite the assertions of organized labor that company unions, or works councils, are mere shams of manufacturers set up to control the workers, a study of company unions indicates that the workers under them have received as great benefits as workers under craft and industrial unions. Company unions are the youngest form of trade unionism in the United States. To an impartial observer, they seem to have as much right to live as the older forms of unionism.

The student of labor will find great changes in the industrial attitudes during the past quarter of a century, both on the part of labor and on the part of management.

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The War marks the beginning of a new epoch in industrial relations. Prior to 1917, there were few industrialists in the United States who would sit at a table and talk over problems of working conditions with labor representatives. Factories today are palaces in comparison with the shops existing at the beginning of the century.

But even more important from a social point of view is the growing voice of labor in industrial management. In many large plants the system of employee representation through works councils has grown up, where representatives of employees and representatives of management meet regularly to discuss and dispose of complaints on working conditions, discharges, hours and other matters. Although no complete statistics are available, it is estimated that several million workers are covered by the works council plan of employee representation.

The works council plan of employee representation is bitterly opposed by the American Federation of Labor, for it removes the federation as the arbiter between workers and industrialists. It lessens its glamour as the champion of labor.

One of the first activities of the American Federation of Labor under the New Deal was to detail organizers to capture the workers in plants working with works councils. The efforts of the union organizers to end the works councils system were apparently aided by the National Labor Board, which called for elections in industries operating under the works council system to determine whether the men should continue under the system or join the A. F. of L. fold. The elections were called after union organizers had done a thoroughly good job in sowing seeds of discontent among the workers, which is not very difficult in times like these. These tactics of the National Labor Board brought forth a storm of protest

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from manufacturers who have been peacefully operating under the works council plan for years.

No one will deny that the success of an organized labor movement depends to a large extent upon the discontent of workers. If satisfied with working conditions, with hours of labor, with wages, they will not strike. The philosophy of a labor leader must be that of discontent. The purpose of employee representation through works councils is to eliminate differences between the parties directly concerned, without outside intervention. This does not fit into the picture of unionism, and the growing number of works councils in industrial plants during the past fifteen years has been a thorn in the side of organized labor. Loud and round are the condemnations of the system of works councils by William Green at the annual conventions of the American Federation of Labor. He regards them as a cancer of unionism, and well he might: for while the federation, from 1920 to the beginning of 1933, had lost something like 2,000,000 members, or half its membership, about 2,000,000 industrial workers had been added to the works councils during this period.

The American Federation of Labor has not always been opposed to the principles of negotiation of management and labor in the settlement of disputes and grievances. One of the first shop committees to be set up during the War was at the Bethlehem Steel Company. This shop committee still continues to function as a works council, and during its life it has settled peacefully more than 6000 cases dealing with wages, hours of labor, and working conditions.

In 1918 Samuel Gompers, late president of the American Federation of Labor, enthusiastically said:

> A shop committee for the Bethlehem Steel workers may mean the beginning of industrial freedom. The same benefits may be

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> established in every other place where a shop committee is inaugurated; nor is it necessary to wait for an award from the War Labor Board. Shop committees can be established through the initiative of the workers themselves.

Even more laudatory in its approval was the report of the executive committee of the A. F. of L. in the annual report of 1918. The shop committee, which was then the embryo works council, was praised in the following words:

> The executive committee believes that in all large shops a regular arrangement should be provided whereby, first, a committee of workers would regularly meet with the shop management to confer over matters of production, and whereby, second, such committee should carry beyond the foreman and the superintendent, to the general manager or to the president, any important grievance which the workers may have with reference to wages, hours and conditions.

But this approbation of the meeting of factory workers with management without outside interference was not long continued by the federation. Soon the committees were being roundly denounced as "company unions" by labor leaders. When the child grew to manhood and asserted its power in bringing about industrial peace without benefit of labor union clergy it was promptly disowned by the federation.

A typical works council is that of the Bethlehem Steel Company, as pointed out above. In that company, for each 200 workers one delegate is elected to sit in the council, which meets regularly with representatives of the management. Of 6000 cases before the works council, two-thirds were decided in favor of the employees, 13 per cent were compromised, 6 per cent were withdrawn, and only 14 per cent were decided in favor of the company. In many cases, the council of employees upheld the

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dismissal of a worker; in other cases the company was shown to be wrong and the employees were reinstated. About half of the cases which have come up before the Bethlehem council have dealt with working conditions and raises. The pension system of the company is also administered by the works council. In one year, $1,171,-049 was paid out in relief work. The council was also instrumental in bringing about a plan of work sharing, by which 20,000 men have been retained on the payrolls of the company during the slump, who would have been let out had the work been confined to a favored group.

The dominant idea behind the Works Council plan is that a plant is an industrial community, in which the interests of all are common. Labor and management air their problems in conference, and a spirit of mutual understanding develops. There is no interference from outside interests. The works council aims to make a plant a self-governing organization.

The works council plan of employee representation has brought greater contentment to industrial workers than have other labor systems yet devised. Take the matter of turnover of labor. The American worker is as highly individualistic as the American manufacturer. The fact that only a small part of the workers in the United States belong to trade unions indicates this. In England, more than half of the industrial workers belong to unions. When times are good, the individualistic American laborer will lay down his tools on the slightest provocation. In good times a turnover of 100 to 200 per cent is not uncommon in many shops; in some cases labor turnover will run as high as 300 per cent. The immense problem involved in this roving spirit of the American workman is indicated by a study of turnover made by one firm employing 40,000 workers. This company found

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that the average cost of hiring and training each new employee involved a cost of $81. Proponents of works councils — and there are a good many — point out that a shop with a dozen or more unions in it, each craft striving to get more than the others, encounters all kinds of friction and strife. In fact, several trade unions have been suspended from the American Federation of Labor because of encroachment on the duties of other unions.

If the New Deal permits, nay, forces the destruction of the budding Works Council system in this country, it will have destroyed one of the most interesting movements in industrial history. Relations between capital and labor were constantly improving. As an index of this trend, the following table of strikes and lockouts, as compiled by the U. S. Department of Labor, is interesting:

Year	*Number of Disputes*	*Year*	*Number of Disputes*
1916	3,758	1926	1,032
1917	4,443	1927	734
1918	3,337	1928	629
1919	3,571	1929	903
1920	3,291	1930	653
1921	2,381	1931	894
1922	1,088	1932	808
1923	1,553	1933	1,562
1924	1,240	1934	1,568
1925	1,300	1935	2,014

One of the most important results of the new trend of employer-employee relations is a sharp reduction in labor turnover. Practically all plants in which employee representation has been put into operation report less "voluntary quits," the reduction being in some cases as much as fifty per cent. From the industrialist's stand-

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point this stabilizing of labor is often worth the concessions which he yields to employees through the works council. This reduction of labor turnover has also an important bearing upon the welfare of workers. If a man hangs on to his job, he is a better provider for his family than if he were to quit his job two or three times a year.

The causes of men quitting their jobs are many. American workmen are more independent, more mercurial, more migratory, than are German or British workers. In good times, when jobs are not hard to find, they do not dread a short stretch of unemployment, and for that reason often throw up their jobs for little cause. One of the most important reasons for men quitting is friction between a foreman and those under him. Antagonism between a foreman and workers means increased turnover, either through discharges or voluntary quitting. Such grievances in the industrial family are something which unions cannot iron out; yet under the works council they all can be cared for. If a foreman is unfair, the facts are placed before the works council, and the foreman must either reform or step down. Employee representation goes a long way in smoothing out the petty irritations which always arise among men working together. To an outsider many of the grievances which come up before a works council may seem insignificant, yet to the men involved they assume large proportions. If allowed to ferment, they create a sour organization.

It cannot be gainsaid that the satisfactory working of employee representation hinges upon a sympathetic attitude between manufacturers and workers. No plan or scheme is workable without correct attitudes. But every student of labor relations will agree that a new spirit of sympathy dominates American industry. Every large industrial organization now has personnel and welfare

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departments, manned by executives who are sympathetic to the workers, who are constantly urging upon the management improvements for the welfare of the workers.

The study of the human factor in an intensive way followed mechanical invention, factory organization and the building up of the distributive system. This turning of the attention of industrialists to labor welfare questions, and the yielding of considerable concessions in plans of employee representation, were not primarily motivated by philanthropic impulses. Satisfied workmen are as necessary to the smooth operation of a factory and the uninterrupted flow of production as are labor saving machines and scientific shop-layout. "A house divided against itself cannot stand" is an aphorism which industrialists realize is sound in application to their business. The question of whether manufacturers are imbued with a spirit of humanitarianism is outside the province of this discussion. But they are, in general, taking a sensible attitude toward the human factor in industry.

Hand-in-hand with the expansion of employee representation has gone the establishment of insurance, pension and stock participation plans on a grand scale. So enthusiastic were some industrialists in putting pension and insurance plans into operation, that the National Industrial Conference Board a few years ago issued a warning that the commitments of some companies might wreck them in periods of falling business. Between four and five million workers are covered by group insurance. Some companies pay the entire cost of the insurance: but the general practice seems to be to have the employee contribute a part of the premiums.

So perturbed was the American Federation of Labor over the growing trend of industrialists to insure their

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employees that it in 1926 launched a big scheme for insurance by establishing the Union Labor Life Insurance Company. Various trade unions prior to 1926 had death and sick benefits, but they have seldom worked out satisfactorily, with the exception of the railway brotherhoods, which were organized primarily as mutual benefit societies, insuring their members against risks declined by the insurance companies.

Installation of pension systems also went along at a merry pace. In 1925 the National Industrial Conference Board reported pension plans in 268 plants with 2,800,000 workers. Organized labor, however, has cast a critical eye at the growth of pension plans, claiming that they are merely a subterfuge of industrialists to cut down labor turnover. But the fact remains that pensions reduce discontent, on which unionism thrives.

In the competition with labor unions for loyalty of employees, industrialists have widely adopted the plan of selling stock to the employees, usually at prices below the market, and on installment payments. It is estimated that in 1929 more than one billion dollars worth of stock was held by employees. In 1926, the Federal Trade Commission estimated that employee stockholders held fifteen per cent of the common and two per cent of the preferred stock of corporations. Industrial economists have frequently hailed this trend of employee stock ownership as marking a new relationship between capital and labor. Leo Wolman, well known as a champion of labor, has said:

> The sale of a company's securities at prices and on terms that are generally more favorable than could be obtained in the open market, and the wholesale purchase for all its employees of insurance against death, are practices which are growing by leaps and bounds and should, if they continue at the present rate (1928) profoundly affect the distribution of income in the United States.

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Hard times have dulled enthusiasm of American industry for insurance, pension and the sale of stock to employees. Now the government is attempting to take over these welfare functions, in the hope that progress will be speeded up. But reform by legislation, as evidenced by prohibition, does not always succeed.

This picture of recent trends in labor welfare is unfamiliar to most persons. Although there are certainly bad conditions existing in some cities, especially the large cities, progress was being made long before the New Deal began to boil its labor kettle. Students of labor agree that the only way to industrial peace and progress is in better understanding and co-operation between management and labor.

What will be the future course of labor during the next four years? Will there be industrial war, or industrial peace? Will the works council system of employee representation be exterminated by the labor witches? And that accomplished, will the labor leftists, fighting fanatically for a "cause," get control of organized labor? Will there be nation-wide strikes, labor marching with a great beating of drums to clash swords with the "economic royalists"? Will a new and more powerful elixir, compounded by labor and politics, be brewed in the caldron?

AUTHOR'S NOTE. Following the cryptic statement of William Green that "Napoleon was warned not to go to Moscow, but he went," the A. F. of L. executive council on August 5 voted to suspend ten unions in the Hillman-Lewis bloc unless they withdrew their support of the Committee for Industrial Organization within one month.

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The Museum Takes Off Its High Hat

R. L. DUFFUS

IF YOU stand at Fifth Avenue and Eighty-second Street, New York City, on a gray day, and gaze at the façade of the Metropolitan Museum of Art you may experience a slight chill. The exterior of the building violates every principle of showmanship. Unlike the glittering store-fronts further down the Avenue there is no come-hither about it.

It looks solid, dark, and distressingly respectable. It looks about as exciting as a tomb, about as alluring as a jail. People took culture pretty solemnly during the years when the Met's walls were rising. They put a lily in its hand and candles at its head and feet. The Museum was established, in 1870, "to encourage and develop the study of the fine arts and the application of the arts to manufacture and practical life, and to furnish popular instruction and recreation." Architecturally it was about as close to practical life as a pyramid.

Yet today that austere façade is a false front — it conceals a vigor and a far-reaching influence that belies it. The Metropolitan is no mausoleum, it is one of the most tinglingly alive, one of the most exciting places in America, once you realize what is going on there. Its spacious and placid halls, though you will rarely see any one hurrying through them or hear any loud voices, are centers of vibrant activity.

Out of these classic rooms, badly arranged because convenience was sacrificed to grandeur, have gone forces which have had an effect on the lives of literally millions of people. The Met is as dynamic as a Ford factory. I am not sure that it and the movement it has helped unleash

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will not in the long run be more important than Ford.

Suppose you go to the art museum in Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Toledo, Houston, or Los Angeles. You will find museum buildings far livelier in appearance than those of the poor old Met and you will find some things being done that are not being done at the Met. But the Met's influence will be represented in those museums. They wouldn't be what they are today if the Met hadn't pioneered.

Suppose you drop into an art class in almost any high school in America. You won't find the Met responsible for what is being taught there, yet it was the Met which set the pattern for getting teachers and children into the museums and for getting art out of the museums into the schools.

Suppose you look over your household furniture, your kitchen and bath-room equipment, the packages on your kitchen shelves, the drapery in your windows, the paper on your walls, the clothing in your closet. There will be nothing in any of these things to make you think of an art museum. Yet it is probable that the Met's influence is reflected there, too, for the shape and texture of your familiar belongings may come from the close co-operation which the Met has sponsored between the museum of art and the newly-fledged American designer.

Perhaps these statements sound like a fish story to those who do not frequent museums, or who visit them rarely and casually. There must be many such, for only one out of every three Americans lives in a community which has a museum, and the average American (if there is one) visits a museum only once in five years. Compare these figures with the statistics of motion pictures, radios and daily newspapers, and you will see that as a nation we haven't got museums on the brain.

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However, that is my main point. The museums don't need to get us all inside in order to do things to us. Twenty-five or thirty million visitors a year, for the whole country, are a mere handful — if we all went once a week the number would be six and a half billion. But among the scanty twenty-five million (who must actually represent a far smaller number, since your museum fan is likely to be a repeater) are key people who are important in our civilization.

The museum is insidious. It is a kind of quiet conspiracy to do things to us without our knowing it. That is to say, it is quiet compared with a brass band, a boiler shop or a multi-million-dollar motion picture. We are affected by it, even though we never enter a museum building, but the effect is painless and often unsuspected.

Let's see how the trick is done. There are all sorts of museums — artistic, scientific, industrial, historical and some combining two or more fields. I am talking particularly about the Met (I call it that because those who make most use of it do and because it is human enough to deserve a nickname), but I might have gone across the park to the Museum of Natural History, or out to Chicago to the Art Institute, or down to Philadelphia, or to the Smithsonian in Washington, or to some museum in almost any city of half a million or more inhabitants.

The Met is primarily a museum of art, though it contains a number of objects — mummies, for example — which may be archeology but would appear artistic only to a mortician. Art is an elastic term, in any case. In the Met's case the word stands for an illustrated history of human culture, as nearly complete as may be, including mummies, tombs, ancient grotesques in terra cotta, suits of armor, pottery, jewelry, textiles, musical instruments, statuary, and, of course, many square yards of paintings,

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from the primitives down to modern times. Not all of this can be good art, by modern standards or by any standards. Much of it, as is pointed out by Mr. Richard F. Bach, Director of Industrial Relations, was frankly commercial in its day.

But it does show the deft fingers, the seeing eyes, the desire for beauty and for meaning, of men and women of nearly all countries and of nearly all the historic periods. You see human life flowing like a great yearning stream in such a collection as that. You see its continuity. You feel less lonesome in your own allotted span of living. That, however, is an emotion — good in its time and place, felt by a considerable number of people, but, on the whole, as things are, a luxury. A museum can produce that emotion simply by being there, but it cannot in that way alone make much of a dent in current civilization.

The new idea, growing slowly throughout the past generation, is not merely to set forth exhibits and permit people to come and look at them, with guards to make sure that they do not touch them. It is not merely William Cullen Bryant's idea, expressed in 1869, that a museum should "encounter the temptations to vice" with "attractive entertainments of an innocent and improving character." The new idea is to call on the past to help us solve our present-day problems. For beauty, in things common and uncommon, is a problem. It is as much so, in the long run, as anything we have to deal with in the economic or political field. Our civilization, since machines came into general use, has been externally an ugly, jerry-built, spurious, nerve-wracking affair. We can't get rid of the machines. We don't want to. We can, however, get rid of some of the terrible things they have done to our daily lives.

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The great American art museums, the Met predominant among them, have been driving at that very objective. I don't know how clearly the aim was realized at the beginning of what might be called the modern museum movement. It is clear enough now.

I called on Mr. Henry W. Kent, the Met's Secretary, who has been connected with the institution since 1905. You will not guess from Mr. Kent's manner or from what he tells you that many of the most fertile ideas of American museum practice have budded out of his bold and active mind. He doesn't look like a high-pressure executive. He resembles a gentleman and a scholar — which, in fact, he is, But he is a good deal more than that, just as the late Charles W. Eliot was a good deal more than the president of Harvard University. He has got things done that have made his museum and other museums which have imitated it powerful educational forces. Education is rather a dull word. Let us say that he has opened people's eyes.

Mr. Kent divides museum functions into three parts. The first is acquisition. When the Met builds an American Wing and stocks it or buys a Blue Boy that is acquisition. The second is exhibition, which is putting things out where people can see them conveniently and to good advantage. This is old stuff. It has been going on since Hector was a pup. But the third function is exposition— trying to get people to see what the exhibits mean, giving them a chance to use them, apply them in their businesses or professions, work them into their daily lives. That is new.

To be precise, it is not so much new in theory as in fact. For about a decade after 1880 the Met fooled around with classes in the industrial arts. Then it was found that such classes merely competed with other art schools, and

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the Met withdrew from the field. The museum wasn't to be an art school. What was it going to be? An attic?

It took a long time, but about 1905 the answer seemed to come. The Met was to be a kind of laboratory — a kind of cultural clinic, if you like. It was to be open to public school teachers, to school children, to students in the art schools, to individual artists, to earnest ladies with leisure to dig for culture (it doesn't do to make fun of them — they sometimes do learn), and ultimately to designers, manufacturers and merchants, as well, of course, as to the general public, which may or may not give fifteen seconds of its valuable time to the average painting. In 1907 Mr. Kent was made Supervisor of Museum Instruction, and the fun began.

There are a few landmarks that give the idea of what happened: school teachers and pupils invited to come in small groups, 1905; a lending collection of magic lantern slides, 1907; first lectures for salespeople, 1914; first exhibit of industrial art, 1917; first production of educational motion pictures by the museum, 1922. The museum was coming out of its brick-and-stone shell. It was putting its collections to work. It was making people see what the past has to do with the present: not the past of books, which are sometimes hard to read, but the past of the things books tell about, with the brush marks, scars of the chisel, toolings, weavings and embroiderings of patient, long-vanished fingers still visible.

In loan exhibitions, in the industrial shows, finally in purchases of the works of living men, the present came into the museum and hobnobbed with the past It was seen that the two got on together in first-rate fashion.

Measured statistically, the museum was not making continuous progress. Its total annual attendance ran around a million and a quarter before the depression,

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then dropped to only a little over a million in 1934. The depression cut into some activities — no longer did the great department stores feel able to send their employees in for instruction, during working hours. There are physical limits to the number of children a teacher can successfully herd into and through the museum. But the idea of the museum reaching out, sending out, penetrating people's lives, has gone on growing.

Now let us suppose that you want to take advantage of the museum's treasures in some better way than merely wandering aimlessly through the galleries — though even that gets you out of the traffic, and rests you, and gives you a perspective on your own and other people's troubles.

If you can't go to the museum at all — even if you live outside New York City — you may rent or borrow lantern slides and photographs, making your selections from among sixty-one thousand of the former and fourteen thousand of the latter. Lantern slides go free to the public schools of New York City, elsewhere for a small fee. During 1934–35 nearly one hundred and forty-two thousand were circulated, thirty-eight thousand of them outside New York. You may also rent motion picture films dealing with such subjects as the temples and tombs of ancient Egypt, the work of excavation, the uses of armor, the making of pottery, tapestry, wrought iron and stained-glass windows, and artists and sculptors at work. Last year there were one hundred and eighty-two motion picture showings in the museum, four hundred and ninety-three in the city schools, one hundred and forty-six in other parts of the United States and in the Canal Zone.

Suppose you are able to go to the museum regularly, or once in a while. If you go once in a while you can arrange

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for special guidance — that is, some one who knows the collections will take you around. You can also take courses. If you are a teacher in the New York City schools you may pursue systematic studies which should make you a better teacher and which, if you do well, will automatically raise your salary. If you are a student at the College of the City of New York, Hunter College, New York University or Columbia University you may take certain museum lecture courses, pass examinations on them and receive college credit.

If you are merely seeking instruction, with no idea of buying a degree or a better job with it, you may thumb through the lecture catalogue and find two general types of courses: those having in general to do with design and the applied arts, and those having to do with the history of the arts. Or you may drop in for free gallery talks on various subjects. The museum has long been giving such talks on Saturdays and Sundays. In the Fall of 1934 it began experimenting with mid-week talks. The instructor feared no one would turn up, but his first lecture drew one hundred and forty-two persons.

Last year (1934–35) more than thirteen thousand and three hundred persons, usually in groups of small size, received special guidance through the museum; about forty-seven thousand attended regularly announced lectures; five hundred and eighty-three school teachers took pretty stiff courses for credit. To stir up interest special exhibits were sent out to settlement houses, branch libraries and schools. Nearly two hundred thousand people came to see them.

Huger Elliott, Director of Educational Work, is the man behind most of this activity. A museum veteran of long experience, he believes in doing even more than he has been able to do. Fifteen years ago he was dreaming

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of a Utopian museum which would have its rare and beautiful exhibits for æsthetic delight and its great study hall, filled with reproductions, charts, secondary exhibits, and so forth, for education. The Met badly needs an educational wing — when prosperity returns perhaps Santa Claus will give it one.

You can't get out a yardstick and measure the effect of education. The museum people are sure it has given their public a more intelligently appreciative attitude. Expressions, the amount of time given to various exhibits, the questions asked — all help tell the story. It is much the same everywhere: you can see garment-workers at the Met on Sunday; steel-workers at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh; automobile-workers at the Detroit Museum; glass-workers at the Toledo Museum. These men and women have at least learned that art needn't be sissy.

So far, so good. Now suppose it isn't precisely education — at least, not education for its own sake — that you want to get out of the museum. You want to get at the principles underlying the making of beautiful, handy and (let us be frank about it) saleable things. You want to make something and sell it: a piece of furniture, silverware, jewelry, a decorative fabric, a woman's dress, a man's shirt or necktie, an automobile, an attractive package for your advertised brand of tooth-paste, shaving-cream, perfume, or breakfast food, an electric stove, a book, an egg-beater.

For such a purpose you'll turn to Mr. Bach's Department of Industrial Relations. You may want training in the elements of design; for that you'll go to the classes conducted by Mr. Bach's associate, Miss Grace Cornell. Miss Cornell started giving courses in design, illustrating them with museum material, about fifteen years ago.

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Only three people signed up for her first course and she thought it fair to the museum to offer to resign. The museum wouldn't let her quit. By 1934 the three pioneer pupils had grown into a small army of twelve thousand.

The museum hasn't classrooms large enough for people who want to learn something about, let us say, "Rhythm and Mass" or "Co-ordination of Color and Design." Two hundred and fifty can get in. Sometimes as many as six hundred want to and can't.

Special courses used to be given for department store executives. They liked them and began to send up their sales-people and buyers — hundreds of them, first and last. For the first time store managers consciously began to apply principles of design to the goods they bought and the manner in which they displayed them. The depression put a stop to the genial practice of hiring store clerks to study design, but the idea of better-designed merchandise has gone too far to be rooted out.

A museum bulletin of some years ago describes how the work was done. "In her analysis of line and color," it stated, "Miss Cornell states the theory and then shows its application to the wares sold in the shops — dress, furniture, lighting fixtures, china, glass — the objects shown having been selected by her and sent from the stores for this purpose. Beside these she places material from the collections, that the student may see how clearly the basic principles of design have been understood by the artist-craftsmen of the past and learn how one's perceptions may be sharpened by study of the collections."

You naturally can't have design without designers, nor good design without recognition and encouragement for the men and women who produce it. Mr. Bach set to work on that problem at the end of the World War. He wanted to help create a tradition of American design,

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bring the designer up nearer the front of the industrial stage, break away from slavish dependence on European models.

How was this to be accomplished by a museum which was full of models, most of them European? Not by copying things, but by getting at the stream of ideas which runs through the ages, and on the surface of which any one work of art is no more than a bubble or a floating leaf.

The war had made the United States a creditor nation artistically as well as financially — or so it seemed in 1918. Most American museums were alive to the possibilities. The Brooklyn, Cleveland and Newark museums stood out, along with the Met, but the Met was first, in Mr. Bach's words, to set up "a division especially for the benefit of manufacturers and designers in the art industries."

"I went after designers," Mr. Bach says, "chiefly on foot."

He went after designers, after production managers, after presidents of manufacturing companies, after important retailers. He worked both ends toward the middle — to make retailers demand better design, to show producers how to provide it. The gospel as he preached it was that "Good design sells better." At first this sentence may sound like rank commercialism. Actually it reflects a great faith in human nature.

To dramatize "the practical value of the collections in current design and manufacture" the Met began to hold annual exhibitions of American industrial art, beginning in 1917. Until 1924 the exhibitions included only articles "based on study in the galleries." In 1924 the scope was broadened so as to "demonstrate tendencies of design in the best current work of the invited industries." All ex-

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hibits had to be American designed and American made.

In 1929 the Met "invited a group of leading architects to function, each as commander of a company of designers, manufacturers and craftsmen," with the requirement that all objects shown be specially designed and manufactured for the occasion. This show was scheduled to last six weeks. The public crowded in so numerously and enthusiastically that it had to be extended to six months.

Five years later, in 1934, the thirteenth exhibition was held, with two hundred and thirty-seven manufacturers and designers represented, touching every industrial state from coast to coast. The objects shown were all new, all specially designed but all ready to go into quantity production. Twenty well-known architectural and industrial designers arranged the groupings. The mummies in the Egyptian wing might well have sat up for a look, and the Chinese Buddhas might have opened a little wider their somnolent eyes.

The artists and craftsmen whose work figured in this exhibition need not have so much as glanced at the museum collections. But their work, being shown in the museum, was bound to be compared and contrasted with the collections, and interest in the museum as a stimulus to living art was intensified.

The exhibitions showed what American designers could do when they put their minds to it. As they went on (the Met wasn't the only cause of this change, but it was an important factor) the designer came of age, people began to learn his name, and he could put his signature on the things he created. Good designers, before the depression, began to command incomes comparable with those of successful playwrights, if not precisely with those of bankers and corporation lawyers. The depression

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brought the incomes down, but, as the 1934 exhibition showed, it didn't kill the designers.

But suppose you are just a designer, not yet, perhaps never to be, a famous one. You want to profit by what the Met has in its collections. So you go to see Mr. Bach and he listens to you and, if you are not already certain what you want to see, takes you to see a few things that may be of use to you.

Maybe you want to design a container for a sanitary preparation. One man did. He looked at the Wedgwood pottery, at the Egyptian rooms, at the lace collection, at the Oriental exhibits. He copied none of these things, but suddenly it struck him that he could suggest purity with a pattern of a seashell and running water. He had the spirit of Wedgwood so well in mind that he didn't have to imitate.

Picking out what a designer really needs isn't simple; there are more than fifty thousand exemplifications of the decorative art in the Met. A costume designer may begin by studying costume exhibits.

"But a wise designer," Mr. Bach says, "goes further. He studies Indian sculpture, Persian miniatures, Chinese vases, Japanese lacquers. These will lead him to armor, to Gothic woodwork, or Greek vases. . . . It is a fact that a medieval corselet has helped a designer of woven silks, Japanese armor has aided a manufacturer of sport skirts, and the etched metal glove of an early Renaissance knight has found an echo in modern neckwear.

"Going on down the roster of faithful museum students we find an Athenian vessel twenty centuries old serving as an inspiration for a modern cold cream jar; a Chinese vase and a group study of Japanese prints worked out in two talcum powder cans seen in thousands of stores throughout the country; an Italian gesso-covered and

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painted picture frame aided a modern manufacturer of tapestry; Russian laces have been of service in the design of modern chinaware; Florentine bottles in fine colors have been used as a beginning in designing printed voiles.

"Embroidered crests offered models for today's costume decoration; ecclesiastical vestments held suggestions for new wallpapers; laces and tapestry, pottery and metal, in turn, have aided the designer of advertising pages; Egyptian mummy cases have given new ideas for the design of labels to be used on bottles of hair tonic; painted furniture has found its colors in Chinese teacups and the palace doors erected by Shah Abbas; soap wrappers have found their beginnings in snuff boxes, laces and wood-carvings; ribbons were suggested by Oriental rugs and Persian lacquered book covers; tiles by miniatures; lighting fixtures by Greek mirrors and battle gear; cretonnes by French pottery, Japanese prints, and Chippendale furniture."

If you are a designer, you will realize the possibilities as outlined by Mr. Bach. If you are not a designer, you may still see how dynamic a museum collection can be made. Art is a continuous flow, with certain principles which seem to hold good through the ages (we moderns can still enjoy the vigorous drawings of mastodons and bisons made by cave men thousands of years ago), but with constant adaptations to suit the spirit of the times. The museum puts the experience of the master craftsmen and artists of all periods at the disposal of the modern designer. He adds, interprets, rejects, tries to say timeless things in twentieth century language. Maybe he's good, maybe he's hopelessly bad. He has a better chance to be good than designers had before the modern museum came into the picture.

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All this is a most abbreviated and inadequate account of what one museum does and of course it doesn't even faintly suggest what all the museums of the country do. The Met is important as a museum because of its energy, its wealth and its central location in the country's largest city. It is important as an art museum because art — good or bad — penetrates into so many aspects of our lives. We can't get away from some kind of art; eating, sleeping, dressing, walking the streets, motoring, shopping, working or seeking amusement, art is always with us. For most of us, most of the time, it is bad art. The significance of the art museum, in coöperation with designers, producers and distributors, is that it is doing something to make our civilization less ugly, which is almost as essential as making it less corrupt, less unjust and less militaristic.

The Met is only one of many art museums, and the art museum is only one of several kinds of museums. As educational forces the museums may come to rank next the schools, colleges and libraries. Already some successful experiments with museum branches have shown that with a little expenditure of money the collections may be made available to vastly larger numbers of people. The future may see museums, big and little, specialized and general, as thick as schools and libraries now are — and looked upon as being quite as essential to civilized life.

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The City

JOSEPH AUSLANDER

How shall I trap you into a poem who are
Too vast for any verses to contain?
What box is big enough to hold a star
Or cage a hurricane?

How shall I lure you into the wordy lime?
How dig the pit with phrase and metaphor?
What stanza is tight enough, what ruse of rhyme
Strong enough for a door?

Love snarling and clawing can at length be tamed
Into a sullen routine, and also hate;
But you, whose beauty and terror cannot be named
Heart's hunger alone must bait;

Only the savage hunger of the heart,
Spitted upon a verb like some young sheep,
Can coax you into the corral of art
And lull your hunger to sleep.

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Can We Control Credit?

HAROLD M. FLEMING

CREDIT control is a very lively subject of discussion today. The honorable governor of the Federal Reserve Board, Mr. Eccles, has advised the press that at this time it is not necessary to take steps to control the rising trend of the stock market. On the other hand Dr. Anderson of the Chase Bank, who often expresses the opinion of conservative Wall Street bankers, recently gained wide quotation by advising the Reserve System to put itself back in position to control an expansion of credit, by reducing the present excess reserves of the member banks. Such advice has also been given to the Reserve Board by its Advisory Council of business men; and in general the subject of credit control is appearing with more and more frequency in our financial pages.

Wall Street has despaired of the "automatic controls" of the Federal Reserve Act, and quite generally believes we need a Supreme Court of Credit Control. Washington apparently agrees. The only important difference between the two seems to lie in the question whether the Court — which presumably would be the Governing Board of the Federal Reserve System — should be chosen by statesmen or by bankers.

Every generation emerging from a depression has worked out a new theory of "Never Again!" and both statesmen and bankers have vied in putting it into operation. We, too, in a period of recovery, are apparently developing a faith of our own — "credit management."

It would be well, however, at this early stage, to examine this new faith rather closely. The differences between Wall Street and Washington are really far less

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important than the assumptions on which they agree. Other generations have been just as confident as we, yet every prosperity has been overdone and collapsed. Are we, too, preparing ourselves for an ultimate disappointment, two, five, or ten years from now?

There are at least three important assumptions in credit management theories. The first is that the members of a Supreme Court of Credit Control will know *when* to act. The second is that they will have the means of making their actions *effective*. The third is that they will be beyond democratic reach when they do act.

The Court, or Board, in short, must have better judgment than a business community in which shrewdness is the key to success, be stronger than a financial community which has practiced the fine art of nullification for centuries, and be beyond the control of a democracy that has rather gingerly set it up.

It is probably the pain of deflation that prevents people from remembering how difficult it is to tell whether business needs checking or encouragement. The record shows that uncertainty on this score is experienced by the most authoritative as well as by the most naïve. The performances of the investment advisory services are unimpressive as a group. The records of the bankers are very spotty. And the records of the Reserve Board show no clear agreement even in such years as 1929. The plain fact is that to the higher-ups as well as to the lower-downs it nearly always seems necessary to encourage business, and practically never seems necessary to discourage it. Way back in 1929 the Federal Reserve Board had no intention of slowing business down. It only wanted to discourage speculation. Not one out of a hundred people who talk of the madness of 1929 saw it at the time and capitalized it, and the same goes for 1933. Not only are

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there no commonly recognizable signals of "over-expansion" or "over-contraction," but there are no esoteric signals. An eerie hunch, seldom reducible to words, and still more rarely convincing to other people, is the nearest that mortals come to knowing where we are in the business cycle at any moment.

It has been persuasively argued that we should pick a particular level of prices and consider the divergences from it as signals for working the levers toward expansion or contraction. But we had a steady level of prices from 1923 to 1929, and the signal was apparently a poor one. Unrealizable hopes, gross over-capitalizations, and speculative excesses accumulated behind the steady price level. A fixed level of prices can disguise over-expansion of credit and a perfect air-pocket of speculation.

Let us, however, grant the assumption that a Board of duly constituted authorities can somehow tell what price level, what volume of bank credit, what rate of capital flotations, and what size of corporate indebtedness constitute a safe and sane "normal condition." This assumption has in fact already been written into the very texture of our banking laws by the amendments to them passed since 1933. Therein one can find directions to the responsible banking authorities to take action against "unreasonable" or "excessive" credit phenomena of many kinds. But to what extent can a duly constituted credit authority put such financial decisions into effect?

A respectable body of financial history says that it might be able sometimes to check a particular kind of speculation, but not a general over-optimism. Particular markets, or particular types of credit instrument, or speculative excesses in particular fields can be held in check or punctured at the will of a strong credit body. The evidence shows that you can control "some of the

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people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but never all of the people all of the time." When the mood is on the financial community, it can match wits with and outmanœuvre any control body which has been set up for it, just as a neurotic can outwit his conscience any time he feels like it.

One of the particular aggregations of credit over which a Reserve authority can usually, though by no means always, exercise control, is the inner money market. Up to the time of the present depression, this was the only lending field over which central bankers have seriously tried to exercise control. They have tried it for only seventy-five years, and the record is full of failures and surprises. Right now the money market in New York is notoriously out of control.

This generation, however, is satisfied with no such humble ambitions for its duly constituted Credit Conscience. Our banking laws have been rewritten to give the Reserve Board or other government authorities control of such diverse matters as the stock market, the real estate market, foreign exchange, capital flotations, bank portfolios, and so on. A banker in Wall Street today can hardly lend carfare without consulting the banking laws.

Yet this aggregate of credit controls no more constitutes general control of credit than the ability to hit a punching bag assures the ability to hit Joe Louis. Credit control is a slow motion of Max Baer. As you see his first swing, you see Joe move elsewhere. Pretty soon you see his opponent reply from somewhere else.

The most resourceful thing in the world is the aggregate financial mind of the community. Every business generation finds new credit instruments with which to fool itself. After every generation there is a great locking

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of stable doors, a great deal of setting up of monitors against each of the particular excesses of the previous prosperity. But the excesses and the fond hopes of the next collapse are different. If by any chance they are the same as before, they bear different *names*.

For example the first half of the nineteenth century financed its hopes and lost its money on bank notes. The second half swore off such notes and had its fling with greenbacks, silver certificates, and bank deposits. Shortly after the turn of the century industrial stocks, trust companies, and insurance companies, all hitherto conservative nonentities among financial devices, were the outlet for a bored financial community looking for excitement.

In 1919 the speculative excitement of the moment was in commodity prices and in commercial credits to Europe. There was no voice of experience to advise caution. After these things collapsed, however, American industry prided itself on its abstention from commodity speculation, and on its hand-to-mouth buying. And bulls — nearly everybody — pointed to the immense reserves of the Federal Reserve System, the excellent record of gilt-edged common stocks, the paying power of European governments, and the long and honorable record of mortgage bonds.

Quite often the encouragement to a credit spree consists of the very elements of strength just introduced into the credit structure to guard against a recurrence of the former disaster. The reformed drunkard is so proud of his new abstinence that he is a sucker for the next kind of excess that takes his fancy. The very control mechanisms themselves become the source of financial courage to undertake new ventures for which controls have not been set up and for which sad experience has not dictated caution.

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The banking legislation of the last three years gives curious evidence of the double motives which, when separated in time, give rise to alternate depression and exuberance. It has rigorously sewed up and strengthened the weak spots in the credit system which the depression exposed. And at the same time it has put new strains on the strong parts of the credit fabric. It has placed monitors on margin speculation in stocks, put the Securities and Exchange Commission in a position to prevent fraud in security issuance, given the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation authority to force good banking on insured banks, shut down on bank loans to bank officers, and so on. But at the same time it has virtually abolished the eligibility requirements for the rediscounting of bank paper, enlarged the national banks' privileges of buying real estate mortgages, and discarded the check of internal gold redeemability and reserve note collateral requirements. While taking care of past excesses it has laid the psychological foundations for an expansion in the future that will make the credit totals of the 1920's look like the work of pikers. And every previous generation has done about the same thing.

Our credit habits may be likened to a quilt, which wears thin and tears apart every ten or fifteen years. We carefully patch up the thin places with good sound cloth, incidentally putting an added strain on the parts which held firm against the recent stress. Then in another ten or fifteen years the quilt pulls apart at new places.

From this obvious inadequacy of legislative foresight probably comes the now prevalent feeling that the "automatic controls" have failed, and that we would do better with financial government by men instead of by laws.

But this is to attribute to the kind of mind that accepts

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the rôle of conscience, censor, or controller, a mobility which is not there. Pioneering, adventurous, reckless minds are always too fast, too inventive, too numerous, and too persuasive for the conservative mind which qualifies for judicial and administrative rôles, and they are particularly so in finance.

It is quite impossible, for example, at the present time to predict or prepare for the debt-making developments of the next ten years. Where there has been heavy loss before, there will be caution. Official control will hardly be necessary. It is reasonably certain that there will be no expansion of loans to brokers "for account of others," no over-trading in stocks on margin, no abuse of depositors' trust through banking affiliates, no top-heavy mortgage guaranty business, and no carefree buying of European and South American government bonds.

But enthusiasm will have its instruments. They may be government bonds, or instalment sales, or insured bank deposits, or officially guaranteed mortgages, or commodity futures. Whatever they are, they will run the usual cycle of every credit instrument, from invention to final control. The securities of one generation become the joy-ride of the next and the horrible example of the third.

History gives no sign that central bankers can control more than the inner money market, or even the latter more than intermittently. Since the Bank of England took up in the 1870's the now conventional duties of a central bank, using the traditional discount rate policies as an instrument of control, central bankers have maintained only a precarious control even of the affairs of the strongest lenders.

In such limited efforts at control over their own friends, catch-as-catch-can methods, such as conservative minds

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are slow to use, have been necessary. Borrowing on consols, as the English call it, or open-market operations, as it is called in New York, have had to be used to "force the market into the Bank." The hiding of reserve strength by one means or another has been necessary in order to prevent the banking community from capitalizing the ability of the central bank to bail out its excesses. The Bank of England now controls its money market by such financially unorthodox methods as getting the banks to hold up new financing until Treasury refunding has been completed. And the rescue policies of the Democratic Administration here have resulted in such limitations on Reserve operations as to leave the System nothing but courtesy control of even the inner money market.

Lastly, the experience of recent years should be sufficient evidence that even if a Credit Court could slow business down at will, it cannot at will speed it up. The gargantuan open-market operations of the Federal Reserve in 1932 simply backfired on the Reserve, producing none of the intended results and leaving the Bank less well equipped to meet the emergency of March, 1933. The country's borrowers, on whom its prosperity depends, were led to credit water but they would not drink. Can that be termed "control" by which you can force a thing in one direction but cannot budge it in the other?

Credit control theories seemingly assume a mechanical nature to our financial habits. Phrases such as "inflation" and "deflation," "priming the pump," "regulating the supply of money," and even "control" smell strongly of machinery, while the application of mathematical concepts to currency and credit forces seems a blend of physics, metaphysics, and downright magic.

On the other hand practical discussion of the business cycle always sticks to such psychological terms as "credit,"

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"confidence," "depression," "shock," and "hysteria," which assume the business cycle to be a fluctuating state of mind.

If the business cycle is a state of mind, then like the stock market, it will "make its own news." And in so far as the psychological analogy is a correct one, there can probably be no such hoped-for control. In psychiatry there is one well-recognized fluctuating state of mind, the "manic-depressive psychosis," which is in many ways analogous to the alternating manias and depressions of the business community. Psychiatrists do not try to control it, because they have learned that they can neither tease the patient out of his depressions nor frighten him out of his manias. In the milder cases they can help if they can find out from the patient something about the deeper conflict which is resolved in the alternate triumph of wishes and of fears. But they have found that it is impossible to inflate or deflate the patient.

About the third assumption in credit control theories little need be said. A Supreme Court of Credit Control can obviously be unmade by those who make it. Already we are preparing means for recalling our recent Indian gifts of authority. The very Congresses that have heaped the Reserve Board's arms with weapons of control have heaped up political means of controlling the controllers. A conflict between oligarchical leanings and democratic feelings is transparent in the amendments to the Federal Reserve Act of the last three years. While on the one hand we have greatly increased the Reserve's privilege of tampering with our business, on the other we have greatly enhanced our own privilege of tampering with the Reserve's business. So when we get steamed up again five or ten years from now about some kind of "investment" that has an unblemished record in the past, and

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are blithely acting on the present greatly expanded basis of confidence, "credit control" will look like arbitrary government. And in good times Americans have very little use for such government.

Even the interests of government bondholders have been sufficient to stay the hand of credit control. Continental reserve bank charters include carefully drawn prohibitions against subordination of the Bank's note-issuing privilege to the Treasury. These prohibitions have invariably proven bonds of straw to the government in fiscal difficulties. Even the Bank of England has learned on which side its bread is buttered. And in America only last December it was pointed out that the Governors of the Federal Reserve System would probably not move to head off credit expansion so long as such a move might jeopardize Treasury financing and disturb the government bond market.

At the present time our attitude toward credit control is somewhat like the Don Juan's attitude toward his newest mistress. He accepts the livery of her love because it can only influence or control him in one direction — toward enthusiasm and self-expression. Later on our attitude will probably change. We will realize that the enthusiasm and self-expression of prosperity is our own making, and we shall be irked by the requirements of our Credit Mistress, the Old Lady of Liberty Street.

At present all that "nine old men" of Credit Control can tell us to do is to take up our beds and walk. Naturally we are for them. The time will come when all they can honestly tell us is to remember our behavior. We would not stand for that in 1929. Since then we have become politically paranoid about Wall Street, and the touchiness applies to anyone who can be blamed for unemployment.

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The difficulty about credit control, if it could succeed, would be that it could destroy employment but it could not create it. "Necessary deflation" may seem necessary to foresighted bankers, but it is only the end of a payroll to the country west of Hoboken.

The sophisticated part of the financial community does not really believe that business cycles can be controlled. With its curiously unreasonable intuition, the same Wall Street that believes in the Credit Conscience idea is also unshakable in its conviction that business cycles will continue to come and go like the tides. The truth is that it expects credit control to remain what it has always been, a private Spartan discipline to enable the strongest lenders in the financial citadel to keep their heads while all about are losing theirs.

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Plenty of Salt

ETHEL WOODDELL

LOVEADA filled the two glasses with water and put a pitcher of molasses on the table between the two bowls of steaming mush. She wiped two heavy pewter spoons on the hem of her apron and placed them beside the bowls. She glanced uneasily at the man by the fireside. The uncertain shadows added caverns to his already thin face and gave him the impression of waving to and fro in the low chair.

"You can come on, now, Andrew," she said.

The man arose stiffly and straightened his crooked back as far as he was able. He crossed the room in a hobbling fashion and eased his legs beneath the cracked oil cloth. He pushed the water aside and poured some molasses on the mush. He stirred the mixture slowly, the spoon making sharp little chinks of sound whenever it hit the side of the bowl. He lifted a spoonful of the mess tremblingly to his mouth and ate with hunger and without pleasure.

"Ain't good without salt and milk, Loveada," he remarked.

"No, it ain't good without salt and milk," Loveada replied. "But next winter the heifer will be fresh and we can have milk, and butter, too." Her eyes glowed at the thought of sweet, fresh butter.

"And maybe a hog," Andrew said. "Maybe we can buy a pig in the spring."

"And a hen and some eggs to put under her," said Loveada. "Chickens."

"We'll plant a lot of potatoes. Potatoes and beans and a hog and fresh milk. We'll live on the fat of the land."

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"Andrew," Loveada's old voice was suddenly tremulous with anxiety, "Andrew, you don't lay blame with me for breaking my hip last spring?"

"No more than you blame me for getting down with rheumatism," Andrew said reassuringly. "It was just something we couldn't help."

They fell silent. Sitting across the table from each other in the dim firelight, they spooned up their mush greedily, savoring of the last taste. Andrew emptied his bowl and with his finger sopped up the little bits of food the spoon had missed. He arose and stumbled back to his chair by the fireside.

Loveada stacked the bowls and glasses together and put the spoons inside them. She stirred the hardening molasses with a knife, loosening the crystallized sediment into the more soluble. She covered it carefully with a clean cloth. She hung her apron on a nail behind the door and went to sit in the other rocking chair beside the fire.

For a long time they sat motionless and quiet. Loveada's hands were folded stiffly in her lap, her gaze fixed unseeingly on the fire. Andrew's thin eyelids hung like sleazy curtains over his eyes. His head nodded and jerked as if in sleep. Between them hung a heavy burden of communal thought. At last Andrew opened his eyes.

"I guess she will get up here tomorrow," he said the words quickly, in a hurry to get rid of them. "She was down in the settlement today, the Dodd boy told me. Be bound to get up this far tomorrow."

"Yes, Andrew," she agreed. "Yes."

Again they were quiet, each mulling over the thought Andrew had brought forth. The old clock, propped with a stone on the slanting fireboard, ticked away loudly. Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock. And occasionally it missed

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a beat and said: tick tock uh tick tock. The flames crinkled and danced and threw grotesque shadows on the mud-chinked walls. The fire popped and flung burning bits of wood on the hearth. The frontlog had almost burned in two, but it still lay as one, little white flames running its length.

"But, Andrew," Loveada said almost defiantly, "Andrew, a body oughtn't to starve to death when they don't have to. Even if it is against the grain to accept — charity." The last word came breathlessly.

"I'd rather starve to death," Andrew said with conviction. "I'd rather eat dirt than take charity. I never thought I would be havin' to take charity in my old age."

"It could be worse," said Loveada. "It might be the — poorhouse."

The poorhouse. They pictured it as a dreadful place of filth and vermin and cruelty. It sprang before them in the flames of the fire and they gazed in terror. The frontlog fell apart with a sharp report and slid gently into the red hot coals.

"After all," Loveada's voice plead for reassurance, "after all we have got our own cabin and our own land. It ain't like we didn't have anything at all."

"Yes, we have got our land," whispered Andrew. "We have still got our own land."

Andrew awakened in the night. The fire had long gone out and the cabin was chill with the winter cold. He passed a hand over his paunchy stomach. The loose rolls of skin caught his fingers as he tried to locate and press down on the spot where a gnawing pain was making him miserable with nausea. He had discovered that if he would press tightly there the pain would cease and he could go back to sleep. He listened for Loveada's breathing but there was no sound in the room.

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"Loveada," his voice was shrill. "Loveada."

"What is it, Andrew?" calmly.

"Nothing," said Andrew, relieved. "I guess I must have been dreamin'."

There was no reply, but Andrew knew that she was not asleep.

"Loveada," he asked curiously, "Loveada, are you hungry?"

"No, Andrew," she replied impatiently. "Of course I am not hungry."

Andrew knew that she was lying to him. Clearly, as though the darkness had rolled away, he saw her lying on her back with both clawy old hands crammed against the pit of her stomach.

There was more mush at breakfast. And the last of the molasses which had gone back to sugar during the night. And each bowl held only half as much mush as it had the night before.

"Is this the last of the meal, Loveada?" asked Andrew.

"This is the last of the meal and the last of the molasses," she answered. "If you will bring me a few ears of the corn you are saving to feed the heifer on this winter I could shell it and grind it in the coffeemill, though."

"We can't spare any of that, Loveada," said Andrew wearily. "There is only enough for the heifer. I counted it the other day and figured she could have five ears a day until grass comes. At that, spring may come late and every ear will count. Besides, it is last year's corn and a lot of it may rot."

"Yes, you are right," agreed Loveada. Then, timidly: "Andrew, why can't we let the neighbors help us? They would be glad to spare us a little of their largess. It wouldn't be like taking charity from strangers."

"No," said Andrew harshly. "I may have fallen to

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takin' charity, but not from my neighbors. Not from the men and women I have grown old along beside. I am not going to be the only one of them that has failed. I — I had rather take it from the government woman. I don't have to face her every day."

"Then when she comes today you want me to — to take one of the orders?" asked Loveada.

Andrew's leathery old face was a battleground of emotions. Hunger, pity, pride and rebellion found expression in his tortured eyes.

"No," it was a prayer. "No, don't take it today. Not today."

"But, Andrew," she followed him to the door. "There ain't a bite to eat in the house. You ain't going to let us starve to death, are you?"

"Tell her to come back tomorrow," said Andrew with finality. "It will give us one more day of unbeholdin' to anybody. Tell her to come back tomorrow."

Alone, Loveada washed the two bowls and the two spoons and hung the clean mushpot over the washshelf. She made up the bed in the corner, plumping the shuck mattresses and pillows. She straightened the ragged under-covers and smoothed her one good quilt over it all. She paused a moment to love the fresh colors and to let her eyes delight in the charming old pattern. She had made that quilt before she and Andrew were married, over sixty years ago. She had lain under it with her only baby who had died before he had yet learned to walk, and had put it over the crude little casket on the way to the burying place. It had been snowing that day.

She swept the floor with a sedge broom. And, as a last act of preparation, took down her yellowish white hair and combed and replaited it before the wavy mirror beside the door. Then she sat down to wait.

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The relief worker, a pert young woman in a shiny tricorne hat, thought she had never seen such a disagreeable old woman. Loveada's replies to her questions were not discourteous, but they held a quality of resentment which bordered on surliness.

"You would have thought she was the one who was doing the helping," the relief worker told her superior that night. "She had nothing to eat in the house. Absolutely nothing. And when I asked her why she and her husband hadn't prepared for the winter I thought she was going to hit me. She said they just hadn't. Like a lot of cases, they simply lazed all summer and now expect the government to get them through the winter."

"But you gave her an order?" the older woman asked.

"No, and that is the funny part about it," the relief worker replied. "I had it made out and handed it to her, but she wouldn't take it. She said they wouldn't be needing any help today, but I could come back tomorrow if I wanted to," indignantly.

"You mustn't let these things become too personal," the older woman said sharply. "A relief worker is too apt to let hard cases become individual affairs and lose sight of what she is trying to do in a wave of personal anger or impatience."

The young woman bridled. "I know what you mean," she said. "That is true but not in this case. She really was pitiful and I could see that she didn't want to accept help. So I looked around for a way to camouflage it. And, do you know, there on the bed was an old Whig Rose quilt. Just as new looking as when it was made. Each thread was still perfect and the colors were a dream. You know how crazy Mother is about those things, has commissioned me to buy up all the good ones I find in

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my work? Well, I offered that old woman fifty dollars for that quilt."

"And she wouldn't take it?" the older woman's face was unexpectedly tender.

"She laughed in my face. Literally. She said that money wasn't made that could buy that quilt from her."

"You find pride in the queerest of places." The older woman arose. "However, you had better go back up there tomorrow and see what you can do."

Andrew came home at dusk. He carried three ground squirrels across his shoulder. They lay, a little bunch of white and brown stripes, with their heads nestled against his scrawny chin and their tails hanging limply down his back.

"Dug 'em right out of their holes," he chuckled. He showed her his hands which were muddy and bleeding. "They thought I couldn't get to them but I fooled 'em."

Loveada took the ground squirrels and skinned and cleaned them with expert swiftness. She cut each tiny, blue-veined carcass into quarters. She put the meat in the mushpot and poured water over it and set it to boil on the fire. Soon the appetizing odor of cooking flesh filled the room. Loveada hovered anxiously near the fire and Andrew eyed the pot with greedy impatience.

"It would taste better with some salt," he said. "But it will be good, anyhow, even if it is just ground squirrel meat."

"We have got some salt," Loveada said excitedly. "I took up the planks in the smokehouse and boiled down the dirt that was under them. Look." She showed him a glass full of brownish liquid. "It tastes just like store boughten salt. And there is plenty more of it."

After a time Loveada took the meat from the pot and

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sprinkled some of the salt water upon it. Then she put the meat in a skillet and placed the skillet upon a bed of hot coals on the hearth. When the meat had become golden and crisp they took it to the table and ate.

"Seems funny to be eatin' off a plate," said Andrew. "We have eat out of bowls so long."

Loveada nodded at him agreeably. She pulled the last shreds of meat from her part of the food and began to suck the bones. They tasted pleasantly between toothless gums.

As was his custom Andrew seated himself by the fire while Loveada straightened up the table. He gave no sign of awareness when she pulled her chair back from the hearth and sank into it. She waited for him to speak, conscious that it was not fitting for her to break upon his thoughts. She ran various answers through her mind, seeking the best one for the question which hung, pulsating, in the air.

"Loveada, was the woman here today?" he asked finally.

"Yes, Andrew, she was here today."

"What," he faltered, "did you tell her?"

"I told her what you said to tell her," replied Loveada without deception. There was no need to tell him about the quilt. It would only make him angry. For she knew that he would feel as she had about selling that quilt. "I told her to come back tomorrow."

Andrew nodded and withdrew into his thoughts. The old clock on the fireboard ticked away loudly. Tick tock. Tick tock. And, regularly, it missed a beat and said: tick uh tock, uh tick tock. The room receded behind a curtain of darkness, leaving the spotlight to the two old figures before the fire.

"I was over on Bald Mountain today," Andrew's voice

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was loud upon the stillness. "Winter ain't hit very hard up there."

"No," Loveada agreed. "I don't guess it would. The Bald is hedged in by the Blacks too well. My mammy used to say that the wind never blowed on the Bald."

"There was snow," said Andrew. "Lots of snow. But it don't lay long on the Bald."

"No, the warmness would melt it."

"I dug under the snow and there was grass. Green grass," Andrew's voice was strangely excited. "I broke off some twigs and they were tender and soft. Almost ready to bud."

"Yes, Andrew," she breathed.

"A heifer could live up there all winter," said Andrew. "All winter without suffering if it had some sort of shelter."

"And if there wasn't a heifer to feed we could have the corn," Loveada grasped the idea quickly. "I could grind the corn in the coffeemill and we could eat it ourselves."

"There would be enough corn to see us through till spring," said Andrew. "With savin'. We wouldn't starve on good hot mush."

"We could eat the bran, too. To keep from wastin' it."

"We wouldn't have to take help," said Andrew with infinite satisfaction. "We wouldn't have to take charity. We would be able to look our neighbors in the face. Unbeholdin' to anybody."

"And I could tell that government woman, tomorrow, that we won't be needin' any help at all," said Loveada with feminine triumph.

They gazed at each other happily before their eyes turned inevitably to the flames. The shadow of charity and the spectre of the poorhouse glimmered and faded in thoughts of planting and harvesting. Andrew closed his

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eyes and his head jerked in sleep. For the first time since spring Loveada began to rock in her chair. Her eyes were hazy with meditation. Once she stopped the motion of her chair and looked at Andrew as if she had just remembered something.

"Andrew," she said complacently, "Andrew, don't forget we will have salt to put in the mush, now. We have got plenty of salt."

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. . . To Thy Jubilee Throng

GERARD PIEL AND JOHN LEE

HARVARD COLLEGE is celebrating this year the three hundredth anniversary of its founding. It would, however, be at once more accurate and more relevant to say that Harvard is celebrating the glories of the university into which, as the invitations to its tercentenary days boast, "it blossomed." For Harvard is no longer a college, an institution of education, but a university, an institution of learning. The development of its graduate schools has reacted profoundly on its college, redirecting its aims and transforming its community. The College holds no longer as its ideal the education and training of its students as men of affairs, but as scholars for its university. Even in the community life of the college the man of activities has begun to yield honors to the student. And to this end Harvard has been devoting the seventy million dollars that the last thirty years have added to its corporate wealth. Though this revolution in Harvard College dwarfs in its scope and aim the "progressive movement" in American education which has inspired such institutions as Bennington and Rollins, it has been subjected to surprisingly few analytical and critical efforts. As students in Harvard College and the subject of this transformation we feel ourselves to be in a unique position at least to demonstrate that such a process is going forward, and to describe its effect on the students' life.

This evolution of college into university has not, of course, been altogether witting; only with President Conant's accession has it been articulated in a statement of policy. Harvard's proximity to a large city postulated

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its enormous increase in wealth and enrolment. Each increase in enrolment demanded an administrative reorganization, and each increase in wealth predicated an expansion of ideals. Student anarchy, due to the College's increase in size, made it obvious at President Lowell's accession that Harvard could no longer be administered as its smaller New England cousins; Lowell's reforms provide the basis for the present statement of aim.

In a recent address President Conant envisioned Harvard as a sort of lamasery where learning will be furthered and the unfettered attitudes of the scholar perpetuated, through the dark ages that impend, by researchers deep among the stacks of Widener Library. As a result, at Harvard young men will no longer learn "how to get on," the gift for which generations of graduates have tendered thanks to their colleges in terms of stadia, libraries, and endowments. This conclusion is, perhaps, implicit in Harvard's accumulation of endowments; for, the acquisition of an independent income having relieved it of obligations to its subscribers, devotion of its efforts to the production of another generation of entrepreneurs would seem not only unnecessary but unworthy.

Chartered in 1636 as a "schoale or colledge" Harvard had pursued the lesser of the alternatives for two centuries. New England's only cultured and learned class in these years was its clergy, and it was in strict accord with their Puritan ideals that they directed the College. Only after 1836 did Harvard graduates go abroad to study — and to be shocked by the disparity between their alma mater and the great German universities. They found Harvard's curriculum, designed more for theology and discipline than education, rigid and sterile; they discovered that mathematics, rhetoric, and the classical

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grammars played a disproportionate part in its courses. Energetic reformers after years of agitation succeeded in broadening the scope of the curriculum but not in improving the manner in which it was administered. Only time could eliminate the obstacles that confronted them: the lack of qualified scholars in the newer fields, lack of funds and a center to train such men, and the preoccupation of the faculty with the theological disputations which in this era marked the decline of the Puritan ethic. By 1869 and the accession of Charles W. Eliot time had accomplished a great deal; under his able leadership reforms went rapidly forward.

Eliot, who, in violation of all precedent, was not a cleric but a scientist, was the first Harvard president who represented this group that had brought the light from Göttingen, Heidelberg, and Berlin. Appropriately he stated as his ideal "the creation of a University in the largest sense." To this indefinite statement he gave the German shape and on the College foundation built the German system of graduate schools that makes Harvard a university. Within the College he enlarged and diversified the curriculum and set up his "elective system" which left to the student the planning of his education within the most liberal limits. The Graduate School in the Arts and Sciences, founded in 1872, and giving doctorate degrees, provided the first domestic center for the production of scholars. In his administration Harvard's endowments jumped from two to twenty millions and the enrolment from six hundred to two thousand students.

This may be described as the collegiate era at Harvard. It saw the mushrooming of myriad clubs and fraternities, the development of intercollegiate athletics, the rise of the major letter, and the general flourishing of the extra-curricular community. College life at Harvard, as

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in other American colleges at the present time, focussed on activities and dissipation and fostered the spirit of camaraderie and competition that marked the man of success. With the best athletes belonging to the best clubs and controlling campus politics, the system was well integrated. And it was in this era that Harvard's Soldiers Field, the first of such colossea, was built. But the increase in enrolment during these years served to undermine this sturdy community. There tended to be a large number of students who were not within the cortex of the collegiate community; the Harvard student's famed indifference first became manifest.

From the point of view of the administration, the situation by 1909 had become chaotic. Under the liberal elective system the students restricted their studies to the snap courses, usually the introductory and necessarily elementary courses in the various fields. They were graduating with only the faintest education and entirely innocent of the virtues inculcated by the discipline of the earlier theological system. Unable to house its tremendous student body, the college could exercise no parietal restraint. With the disintegration of the collegiate community, the students lived in a more or less complete state of anarchy and, by some reports, barbarity. A. Lawrence Lowell, as chairman of the committee that investigated this situation, took office as president with a thorough understanding of conditions and a program of reform.

As his pattern, President Lowell adopted the organization of the great English Universities, Oxford and Cambridge, and from it derived his house plan, tutorial system, and his "system of concentration and distribution." It was not sheer Anglophilia that determined his espousal to this ideal. The Oxford-Cambridge college communi-

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ties, independent entities within the University corporation, were, perhaps, accidents of history; but in the modern universities they provided an effective system for the control of a large number of undergraduates. The Oxford-Cambridge students in their colleges found orderly, coherent communities, whose solemn histories and hoary traditions had established an atmosphere of learning and study. Under their separate college faculties they worked on the honors system, without compulsion, and voluntarily sought scholarly distinction in stiff competition. They were not even examined until they applied for their degrees in their last year. The tutor exercised the only scholastic supervision, and that in the guise of philosopher and friend to his tutees. The "varsity man," whether learned or not, was somehow marked by his exposure to learning with the judicious and critical unenthusiasm that is the pride of the scholar.

For Harvard the Oxford-Cambridge college system seemed to provide a basis, in accord with the ancient principle "divide and rule," on which the anarchic and unwieldy student body might be separated into more malleable, congenial communities. Tutorial supervision seemed of itself a splendid instrument of education. By adapting learning with a jesuitical economy to the capacity of various minds it evoked from them a proportionate enthusiasm. Transcending such considerations, it was noted that Oxford and Cambridge by some magic made learning and the air of learning in the eyes of the undergraduate eminently fashionable and desirable when in our colleges it was tolerated only when accompanied by other adornments. In such an atmosphere the true scholar might flourish unashamed. Applied to Harvard under the Harkness endowments, the Oxford-Cambridge system became the House Plan and the Tutorial System.

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But the application of these reforms, particularly the House Plan, raised serious administrative problems. In England, the colleges are independent units with separate faculties in their traditional fields of learning, long histories of achievement: and are united under the university only in administrative matters. Even the graduate students are enrolled and study in one of the colleges. At Harvard the College was the undergraduate unit, and the graduate schools were under the university. The community life of the College, such as it was, centered in entrenched organizations — the Athletic Association, the publications, the clubs — that were not to be tampered with. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, excluding from consideration the various professional graduate schools peculiar to American universities, defied absorption by its very size and tradition into the (at that time) more frivolous college. Where at Oxford and Cambridge the university was a product of the colleges' unification, at Harvard the House Plan called for a fissiparation of the university into colleges. It became a question not of transplantation but of adaptation. The final shape taken by the House Plan at Harvard illustrates the vitality of the domestic organization.

The prep school graduate, unlike the public school graduate who matriculates at Balliol or Emmanuel, applies for admission not to a House but to Harvard College. He spends his freshman year directly under the College supervision in the Yard — the center of the College and University where are dormitories, now reserved exclusively for him, administrative and classroom buildings and the library. It is not until his sophomore year that he enters a House. The college faculty and their courses have been preserved intact, and the Graduate School remains independent both of College and House. The function of

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the House is thus restricted by extensive limitations, and the House Plan at Harvard is still in the process of development and experiment. But already, in its fifth year, this unique synthesis of Puritan, German and English organizations points to its own solution not only of the problems that faced President Lowell in 1909 but of the actuation of the dream of all college presidents: the "creation of a University in the largest sense."

Within President Lowell's immediate means was the application of his curricular reform: "the system of distribution and concentration," which was instituted soon after his accession to office. Stipulating not what the student should study, but how, this system permitted him to plan his education and submitted him to training. In this light, therefore, it may be considered as a compromise between the "theological" and the "elective" systems. Under the heading of distribution, the student takes the introductory courses in the four main fields of knowledge: a social science, history, economics, or government; a course in literature, classical or modern; a natural science, in which he is subjected to the discipline of the laboratory techniques; and a course in abstract thinking, mathematics or philosophy. Although Conant has abolished distributional requirements in a general relaxation of academic supervision, under Lowell's plan of concentration the student still selects a portion of one of these four fields and spends the next three years in mastering it thoroughly, narrowing his study in successive stages until, in his senior year, providing he qualifies for honors, he writes a thesis on some microscopic question involved in it. The writing of the thesis has as its primary object instruction in the scholar's technique. Thus the student is to be familiarized with all and made master of one of the intellectual disciplines.

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The student is still subject to the supervision of the courses and the directors of the courses; he must take their examinations and occasionally is required to submit a well documented paper on some phase discussed in it. To graduate he must pass in most of them. Distinction, however, is gained on the basis of the creative effort he may choose to exert in organizing his knowledge and coming to conclusions. His efforts and capabilities are here judged by his showing on his thesis, and on comprehensive examinations given by his special department, which are similar to the Oxford-Cambridge Honors examinations. To assist him with his self-education in his concentration field, he is assigned to a tutor as at Oxford and Cambridge.

The tutor is the nerve of this curricular system. In his tutorial conference, the student meets his tutor on a friendly and informal basis for discussion and guidance in his formulation of syntheses and conclusions. Work with the tutor is practically non-compulsory, serving only to add to distinction; for, except in extreme cases, failure to work with him does not jeopardize just-passing grades. Scholastic achievement is thus a matter of original effort, and attainment of honors becomes a realistically worthwhile accomplishment. Nearly half of the class of 1936 sought and achieved distinction with their degrees. In other words, entirely of their own volition and with the encouragement and example of their tutors, approximately half of this graduating class found it worthwhile to master a special field in their studies and to learn the research techniques in submitting their theses. For a year by their own choice they experienced the labors and satisfactions of the scholar's life. They graduated equipped with a specialty and at least a rudimentary grasp of the scholar's tools. If they chose, they could project the ex-

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perience of that year as their life's work. And well they might; for the extra effort and labor they expended in their esoteric specializing has only its own reward — and that not to be enjoyed until a career of productive research has brought real achievement and perhaps fame. No other college in the country can claim to have made the rigors of the scholar's career more attractive.

In his own life and through his personal and informal contacts with his tutees the tutor brings them into close acquaintanceship with the attitudes and labors of those engaged in the advancement of learning; for his tutorial function is the least of his duties, which may include lecturing in a course and invariably entails productive research. This latter is most crucial: publication of monographs in the various journals of the scholar's profession and ultimately of an authoritative book are by definition more important than teaching ability in a university — an institution of learning. Indeed, production of original research work is the *sine qua non* to a Harvard appointment, and the tutor, usually engaged on a one or two year appointment, is in the very midst of the intensive competition for the rarer permanent appointments which marks these vital years in a scholar's career. A young man whom the students may know personally and admire, the tutor serves to develop among them a reverence for scholarship as a worthy and arduous employment for a man's life. He learns at least that the adage of his prep school days, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach," has a less general application.

The institution of this "honors system" at Harvard still finds certain conflicts with the older "course system." The course system is based on the old pedagogical philosophy of force-feeding and assumes the student a sluggard until he demonstrates otherwise. Regularity of attend-

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ance at lectures and memory retention of the material offered, the virtues on which it places its premium, are not necessarily inherent in creative genius. These regulations have, to a certain extent, been relaxed at Harvard, but the student must still pay the penalty of low marks in the courses which he may choose to sacrifice as unnecessary or of no value in his efforts to coördinate the work in his field. Yet the very fact that these aspects of the course system are noticed and are the subject of agitation demonstrates that Harvard's curriculum has fostered certain unique attitudes among its students.

Theoretically, the tutor is the heart of the House Plan: and in no better way may his importance and the new focus of the college community be illustrated. In his House, the student, according to the plan, will live in a community of scholars younger and older and find his study, now become his major occupation, fostered by a climate of learning and scholarship. The execution of this plan predicates, first, the extinction of the larger, distinctly extra-curricular, college community; and second, the creation in the Houses themselves of smaller scholars' communities.

The first of these objects has been largely accomplished, the resulting confusion and amorphism in undergraduate life will show under close examination some evidences that the second is within possibility.

No American college has ever had so socially diverse an enrolment as Harvard. Where the enrolment in other colleges reveals a comparative uniformity of antecedent and income, Harvard has long had a definite hereditary aristocracy and an unwieldy "proletariat," both stemming directly from Boston. The former, the "St. Grotlesex" group, are the sons of Boston's first families — which trace their splendor from the expulsion of the Tories in

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1778—and their prep schoolmates who identified themselves with them. The proletariat, called "commuters," of largely imported stock, graduated from Boston's High Schools and commutes from the city and suburbs to Harvard Square. Between these two classes are the two groups generally characteristic of the other New England colleges. The first consists of the graduates of Hotchkiss, Choate, Hill, Taft, and Andover and Exeter, and the second is the group that attended local country day schools, the smaller prep schools and suburban high schools of better standing, and whose income and social position is a notch below the bona fide prep school product. This definition of classes, seemingly rough and arbitrary, bears real historical accuracy.

The collegiate community was adjusted to an explicit recognition of each of the classes. They had their own clubs and almost mutually exclusive dormitories, and they often retained their unity in political action. Of the four classes, the commuters were practically excluded from participation in college life. In disintegrating the college community, the House Plan is engaged in a direct attack on this social stratification. An integral principle in the House Plan aims at just that end. The "cross section principle," by which students are assigned to the Houses, was evolved three years ago in a situation made painfully apparent in the then current wheeze: "In Eliot, they have arrived; in Lowell they're getting there; in Dunster they don't care." Under the cross section principle this unfortunate circumstance is avoided by distributing these three strata evenly through the Houses. In this process of democratizing, the House Plan challenges the fundamental assumptions of the college community.

The administration, however, has not yet taken final issue with the problem. It permits large numbers of stu-

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dents to live outside of the Houses and the House Plan in the "barracks" and "barns" on the one-time Gold Coast, the pre-House Plan residences of the wealthier students, and thus to perpetuate some important features of the departed college community. Notably, they give the clubs a *raison d'etre* in the function of providing them with moral and physical sustenance. As a result the strata, even within the Houses, retain a certain vitality and preserve their collegiate attitudes.

The first two strata are by no means scholars; they have always ranked lowest scholastically and hunted the snap courses most inveterately. They seek a "liberal" education, and only fourteen per cent of them enroll in those courses, scientific or legalistic in character, that lead most generally to definite professions. In contrast, more than half of the lower two groups rank in the upper half of class and more than thirty per cent of them study for their professions.

The obvious explanation of this situation is the economic. The commuter, attending Harvard only by dint of economy and with the entertainment of strong purpose, naturally tends to choose his courses with an eye to receiving training for a definite career. The upper social groups are in a position to enjoy their college years, and they are not ordinarily obligated by parental sacrifice and limited prospects to achieve high grades. Therefore, as Corliss Lamont, while editor of the "Harvard Advocate," revealed in a sensation-making article they "run the college." They staff and almost own the publications, the political offices, the clubs, and even the athletic teams.

But with the realization of the House Plan these activities have lost heavily in glamour. The political institution, the Student Council, and its subsidiary offices, has become a purely philanthropic organization, collecting

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funds for the Red Cross and other worthy projects. The clubs have become purely social organizations, utterly devoid of political influence; for example, a student will "heel" for a managership for the purpose of making a club, but his club will not help him win the managership. Student interest in intercollegiate athletics has so declined that the college must now call on the graduates of another day for endowments to support its gymnasium and stadium. Of the publications, the college daily, the Crimson, has a circulation largely because it has exclusive right to the publication of college notices. The Lampoon must perform such extra-collegiate pranks as the recent raising of the Red Flag before the Supreme Court Building to merit attention from its undergraduate public. At one time there were two literary magazines in the college; at present the Advocate, the only survivor, has less than three hundred undergraduate subscribers.

There is no generally accepted standard for a successful Harvard career. The presidency of the Crimson is not a distinction that leads admiring freshmen to point with awe, as is the case in other colleges. And there is correspondingly less incentive to effort in extra-curricular fields. The football captain carries the marshal's baton at graduation only because no other name is made so familiar by the metropolitan dailies.

Extra-curricular activities thus no longer afford the assurance of identity; there is no *cursus honorum*. There is above all no point of reference for judgment or action offered by the community.

The confusion takes on a peculiar significance when considered with reference to the mob enthusiasm characteristic of other colleges.

But there is one great sentiment shared in common by all Harvard students — that is pride in Harvard's faculty

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and equipment as unequalled, at least in America. This pardonable pride in the fact that many Harvard faculty members are authorities and have published recognized works in their special fields, and in the realization that much of America's cultural history is also Harvard's, has been heightened by the celebration of Harvard's Tercentenary. It may serve to indicate the new focus induced by the House Plan.

At the end of his year of incubation in the Yard, the Freshman, having selected his field of concentration, must choose a House. Here he faces a dilemma which soon resolves in the realization that there is no particular reason why he should choose one House or another. He discovers, further, that his assignment to the House he might select is largely a matter of chance. This would demonstrate that the beautiful Georgian mansions that constitute the Harvard Houses had not yet assumed distinguishing characteristics, that, in short, they were not yet communities. The Harvard Houses are all of the same age, are similarly equipped with dining hall and library, had their origin in the same House Plan, include students in all fields in the college, and are completely innocent of tradition. Attempts to incubate traditions have been more amusing than effective (Eliot's own "Gaudy Night," lawn bowls and skittles at Lowell). History and tradition are not subject to administrative order and the House Plan must wait for time to add them. Meanwhile, in the respects wherein the creation of House communities is subject to such orders, the administration is careful to maintain a strict uniformity in accord with cross section principle. For like reasons the administration hesitates to assign specific fields to each House; for some fields, as intimated before, tend to attract the socially-less-identified.

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Within the Houses polite community activities have been developing. House committees are elected for the purpose of supervising activities such as dances, minor dramatic performances, and the House athletic teams that constitute the intra-mural leagues. These innocent activities are of such small import as to engender only the most convivial amateur spirit. They could scarcely be called extra-curricular activities. Faculty members, furthermore, are encouraged to participate. As an illustration of the new spirit, most of the Houses now have "music rooms" where are a victrola and recordings of fine music bought by the proceeds of a levy on all House members.

None of the House activities are likely to compete with study and learning as the focus of the student's attention or House organization.

The present trend toward the development of the House communities and the disintegration of the college community points to the success of the House Plan. The decline of the extra-curricular community in this fashion leaves the way open for the development of a curricular, scholar's community; the ultimate synthesis will probably find a compromise between them, which is indeed a progression. A proposed economy in the tutorial system which would restrict the privilege of tutorial supervision to the Honors candidates indicates a possible distinction between honors and residence degrees in the Oxford-Cambridge manner, though Harvard is more likely to retain the force-feeding system for those who do not seek distinction. The parallel between Harvard and its English counterparts is growing closer. The question whether America also can find places for men trained as scholars but pursuing other occupations, is a source of possible objection to the new Harvard.

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But the present Harvard administration takes its training of scholars more seriously. The celebration of Harvard's Tercentenary as the Tercentenary of National Education is symbolic of its new ideal. The emergence of the college as the training and proving ground for a national university posits an enrollment even more diverse in class and sectional representation than Harvard now has. The recently instituted Conant scholarships, providing full support for four years in college for able students from the Middle West, are to be extended to all sections of the country and provide a series of domestic Rhodes Scholarships. In this and other ways Harvard plans to relieve itself of its dependence on the schools, and particularly the prep schools, of the Eastern seaboard and New England, and to attract to its college for training as future scholars the most promising students from every state.

Harvard may not believe that all of its future students are to graduate as scholars, but none the less it will seek to train them for such a career; with its splendid equipment, it can provide that training and the environment in which it may take effect. It will graduate its students with a decent respect for learning and its advancement. Whether that constitutes a practical education in the accepted American sense is yet to be determined. If it does not, Harvard plans to leave that function to its less wealthy contemporaries.

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Poetry in The North American Review

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE once remarked, "A rainbow is as real as a derrick." We have never forgotten that. We have been haunted by the profound truth of it, haunted by it more than ever during the debacle of our material Colossus.

It has been forced in upon our minds and hearts that we had been looking so long at derricks in a derrick-ridden universe, we had lost track of rainbows altogether.

We had suffered so insidious a submission to the Tyranny of Things, the zest for rainbows had completely gone out of our souls.

Or, at all events, it had been clouded over and smothered under by the Derrick Dynasty.

Granted that the derrick is an exceedingly formidable and efficient machine; that it works; that it can lift mountains. Nevertheless this truth remains: that the rainbow can lift more than ten thousand mountains — it can lift the heavy human heart!

And this is the point where poetry comes in. Indeed, under the winged auspices of the rainbow, we have been meaning poetry all the time. A President of the United States took occasion recently to remind us that, as a nation, we need something to raise our eyes beyond the immediate horizon; that we cannot go along just watching our feet; that a great poem can do more than all the legislative hullabaloo in the world.

It is our hope and our intention to help restore poetry to its ancient heritage and high estate. We want to help put it back where it belongs in the lives and affections and affairs of our people.

We feel that at long last, after a dusty Roman holiday

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with progress and machine comfort and buttons and buzzers and contraptions and clever paraphernalia and infallible statistics and the deification of Fact, we are swinging back full circle to a very old and a very simple truth. We are being compelled, by the abject collapse of a material conception of living, to recognize once more the terrible necessity in our lives for that strength, that pillaring of the spirit, that informing and sustaining power which it has always been the special virtue and splendour of poetry to impart.

Whether or not a great poem — admitting that any such may be discovered lying around — will save the nation, is beside the point. Great poems have saved nations in the past. That is nothing new. Poetry has kept faith with the Tribes in every Babylonian Captivity. It will do so again. When everything else fails, poetry will remain. Poetry cannot fail.

But to have poetry, we must have poets. And to have poets, we must have audiences. And to have great poets, we must have great audiences. These audiences it is our wish to find as it will be our endeavour to keep.

We are not proposing one more "little" poetry magazine, stuffed with bran and hung with cowbells. We are not proposing a precious and private vacuum for the vapourings of our friends.

Because the so-called "pure" poetry magazine appeals and caters only to the precarious few; because, in the general magazine that enjoys a prosperous circulation, poetry is employed only as so much "filler," being abused, at best, as a sort of shabby relation, the Little Orphan Annie of the literary world; because we are sincerely convinced that poetry should be rescued from the propagandists, politicians and cultists; because we feel that poetry should be delivered from the Right Wing and

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Left Wing fanatics and given back her birthright and franchise, the natural and unfettered use of *both* her wings — the editors of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, commencing with the Autumn quarter, will dedicate a solid and consecutive portion of the space at their disposal to the best in poetry they can find. It will be the major motive of their policy to give substantial representation, in each quarter, to one young poet, whose talent appears to merit that distinction, as the "Discovery" of that quarter.

It is to be hoped that this policy will, in time, create a channel for the communication of the noblest thought and feeling of our age to the people.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER

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A Group of Poems by Elizabeth Bohm

LAND'S END

This is the end of the land;
Here I am forced to halt,
Ankle-deep in sand
With its withered sift of salt.

Before me hills in motion
Burst with volcanic speech,
Erupting craters of ocean
In white lava over the beach.

Not as the herring who rush
Like under-sea fields of wheat
Bending within the brush
Of water-wind straight and fleet;

Not as the gulls who dip
Into wave and then into sky,
Not as these can I slip
Down this element, lest I die.

Sealed is that pastel world:
The fishes colored like roses,
The fishes striped and pearled,
The plant that opens and closes;

The crab's steps slow and light,
Scarcely tapping the sand
As it drifts its lunar white
Over a hulk weed-fanned.

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A hundred fathoms below
A peaceful evening blue
Sifts evermore, a slow
Unending hour of dew;

Five hundred fathoms under
A billion years, or a year,
Pass in silence like thunder
That I shall never hear.

ELEGY FOR A GOLDFISH

In gay gold armour, little knight,
He met death, and death gained;
Who but death would think to fight
One so fragile-veined?

Down the cold depths of a green globe
He like a candle dwelled.
Pale nacred gills in a faint throb
Of living closed and swelled.

His small chill sense knew haste and fear,
Hunger and joy of leaping;
Last of all it grew unclear
And thinned off into sleeping.

Drawn from himself, he left his place,
Rose to the air, and slumbered:
Bird of the depths, with every lace
And wing and spangle numbered.

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FOR A SILVER PERSIAN

Is this a beast? — This stately grace
Which walks magnificently slow,
This wonderment of plumes and lace
Fanning sea-like to and fro.

And can it be the lower thing —
Stirred gray like valley clouds at morn,
Each ear a little tufted wing,
Each paw a rose with dainty thorn.

No, we it is who fawn and scrape,
O soft auroral burst of fur,
Wooing, as we smooth your shape,
Nirvana in a purr.

BIRDS

Noon is a bird with oil-blue feathers
Singing in the crystal branches of the sun;
Midnight, a gull the color of old iron,
Roosts on a lonely weir until the world is done.

All of them are birds, the flying lights, the darkness;
All carry beauty in the new moons of their claws;
From dusk, the snow-bird drifting over silence,
To dawn, the red bird with eyelids of blue gauze.

HEATHER

I've never been where heather grows;
But travelers bring a story
That pinker than the wayside rose
Is heather at its glory.

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They say a heather field will spread
To miles to tiny bells,
Easy as a featherbed
And warm with honey-smells.

I'd like to wade its shaggy bloom
And hear, in sun-drenched peace,
That humming like a cottage loom
Of summer's many bees;

To stretch me out upon the ground
Where heather blossoms deep,
Pull the blue linen sky around
My chin, and go to sleep.

BROWN CLOVER

Here in July's high flood
The clover-bloom is brown,
Rust-brown with hints of blood,
And the first leaf is down.

Seeds stick to my skirts;
The blackberries are over.
Why should it hurt — but it hurts
Somehow to see the brown clover.

There are asters before us still
And goldenrod sopped with sun;
Our eyes shall have their fill,
But the clover-bloom is done.

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SNOW

I slammed the door behind me hard
And entered falling snow.
The ground seemed lifted heavenward,
The quiet clouds were low.

There was I, annoyed and late,
A feverish petty fool,
And there the snow, so free of weight,
So cool, so very cool.

As silently and patiently
It clothed the withered sod.
I leaned against a whitened tree
And made my peace with God.

SEPARATE DUST

Body I use, before you grew
You were the world, the grass, the sea,
The dust that powders noonday blue,
But you were not a part of me.

And when you pass from me again
And unremembering decay
You shall belong once more to rain,
To dark, to day.

But I, who never was the earth,
Whose thoughts were never built of bone,
Shall not follow your rebirth
Into a sunset or a stone.

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EMPTY HOUSE

I shall be alone today.
From noon to dusk will crawl
The shadows, growing thick and gray
Like vines across the wall.

There will be no disturbances,
Walking or speech or laughter,
No din of kitchen pots or hiss
Of splattered running water.

I shall feel silence like a stone,
The clock's heart, soft and loud,
And through the doors, alive, unknown,
The bright eyes of a crowd.

NOON

Wind and water, sky and grass,
Peace is in these ancient things;
Sun that sparkles, gusts that pass,
Drift of clouds and blurr of wings.

Healing drowses in the blown
Long grass and healing in the sky
And in the milkweed's puff of down
Ballooning delicately by.

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Children Wanted

GENEVIEVE PARKHURST

IN A BARE flat in New York a woman lay unconscious. Her husband had found her on the floor surrounded by their children, two, three and five years of age. The woman, unwilling to bear another child when her husband's wages were inadequate for the family, had tried to effect an abortion by self-mutilation.

The doctor sent for a trained nurse who had had long experience in such cases. After three weeks between life and death, Mrs. Sacks recovered. The day the nurse was to leave she said: "If I have another baby it will be the end of me. Won't you do something to help me?" The nurse told the doctor but his answer was a coarse laugh: "Tell Jake to sleep on the roof."

Six months later the nurse was called late at night. This time Mrs. Sacks had been to a five-dollar abortionist. She died a few minutes after the doctor arrived.

It was three in the morning when the nurse got home.

She looked out over the rooftops to the distant tenements while the whole dark story came up before her. It was not the story of Mrs. Sacks alone, but of the armies of women like her — the mothers of the world's needy who spent their lives bearing children until they died of them or grew old and desperate before their youth was gone: and of the babies, puny in body and feeble in mind, for whom there was no welcome.

Dawn came, and for the nurse it was a new day. Throwing her bag into the corner, she sent her uniform flying after. She was through with nursing and doctors who, faced with this great need, took the other side of the street and went on their smug way. She was going to tell

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women what to do. "I *will* be heard," she said aloud to herself. "I *will* be heard."

The nurse was Margaret Sanger. The time was 1913.

She was ill-equipped for the fight. She had neither money nor influential friends. Of propaganda she knew nothing. Nor had she specific knowledge of contraceptive methods.

Today after twenty-three years Margaret Sanger has been heard. In this country alone there are two hundred and thirty-five clinics, all operating within the law. Even in China birth-control is gaining momentum. Returning recently from India, where she traveled ten thousand miles in nine weeks, Mrs. Sanger brought news of fifty clinics and teaching centers started while she was there.

With the growth of the movement, its purpose has grown. In the beginning her one deep concern was to bring relief to the women of the poor. As she went on many young couples in better circumstances came to her for advice. Now she sees birth-control as a doctrine of human rights — the right of the child to be wanted; the right of the married to say how many children they shall have; the right of the mother to say when she shall have them.

"The term 'birth-control'," she said recently, "does not imply only family limitation. It means the control of fertility. It includes the problem of the married who want children and are not physically able to have them. In our New York Clinic our doctors have learned that a certain malformation of the male sperm is often responsible for wives who are able to conceive but not to carry a child to full-time. At present we have not the equipment for treating sterility patients. But in several centers our physicians are examining them and recommending doctors whom they know have studied the subject."

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What kind of a person is this woman? In 1916 when I was assigned to interview Margaret Sanger in San Francisco, I tried to picture what she would be like. Her arrest in New York, her flight to Europe, and her trip across the continent amid a thousand jeers, had brought her into the headlines. I was sure that, while she might not be the harpy portrayed by opponents, she was at least an Amazon.

When I knocked at her door, a low-pitched, musical voice asked me to come in. Sitting up in bed was a frail and delicate woman in her early thirties. The pallor of her face and lips, her rounded chin, her easy manner and well-modulated voice had nothing in common with the battling Nelson I had expected. But as she talked with me about her mission, a swift change came over her. Gray eyes glowed. The way she raised her head gave emphasis to her chin. There was no doubt then of her fighting spirit. I saw her not as a woman hell-bent on giving out birth-control information, but as a kind of Joan of Arc, driven by some inner compulsion.

Born Margaret Higgins, she was the sixth of eleven children. Her home was in Corning, New York, where her father was a stone-cutter. Irish by birth, he was a free-thinker, a friend of Henry George and disciple of Robert Ingersoll. (One of Margaret's earliest recollections is a meeting he had arranged with Ingersoll as the orator. Out of his own pocket he had rented the town's only hall, which belonged to a Catholic priest. Hearing who was to speak, the priest promptly locked the doors. A pitched battle between the opposing forces ensued, garbage heaps supplying the ammunition. In a rain of carrot and turnip tops Mr. Higgins took Margaret by the hand, and leading the parade with Ingersoll, walked through the streets to the woods where Ingersoll spoke.)

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There was affection in the Higgins household, but little happiness. The mother, gentle and resourceful, managed by hard work and careful planning to keep the family together. Food was often scarce, particularly after the Ingersoll episode. When a new baby was coming, if there was no money for a doctor, Mr. Higgins was the midwife. Mrs. Higgins washed and scrubbed and sewed and scrimped without complaint. Never strong, and worn out with child-bearing, she died at forty-eight. Mr. Higgins lived to be eighty.

Margaret's will-power had an early rooting. Her father taught her that fear and cowardice were the devil's pitchforks. Listening to him, the child took herself in hand. She made a ritual of going upstairs alone in the dark, into the cellar without whistling, of getting up on the rafters in the barn and jumping down on the haystack — things that filled her with terror.

Before she was sixteen she began to prepare for a medical course at Cornell. Then her mother died; Margaret took over the home and she soon saw that Cornell was out of the question. As the best substitute she turned to nursing.

Specializing in obstetrics, she took care of rich and poor alike. It was then she began to see the difference between patients who had their children at reasonable intervals and those who had them close together. She knew nothing then of contraception. All that she knew was that something ought to be done.

Before her purpose could be clarified she had met and married William Sanger, an artist, and at the end of a year she was expecting a baby. One day her doctor found that Margaret had incipient tuberculosis. Six months in the Adirondacks and she was back in New York for the birth of her first child, a fine, healthy boy. But her re-

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covery was slow and again the tonic prescribed was a long stay in the mountains, where she went with her baby and a nurse.

Months passed in which there was no improvement. One day her sister arrived to take the baby away. In the evening Margaret overheard her whispering to the nurse, and realized that her condition had been pronounced hopeless. That night her sleep was fitful. Suddenly at dawn when she had dozed off, she awakened with a start. Sitting up in bed she rocked back and forth saying over and over to herself, "I will *not* die. I will *not* die."

Tiptoeing into the next room she awoke the nurse, telling her to pack as they were going home. In another hour they had stolen out of the house with the baby and were on their way by horse and surrey to Saratoga where they caught the express for New York.

For six years Margaret Sanger kept up her contest with death. As her health improved she grew restless. She wanted to be in the thick of life again. For a time she became interested in women's clubs and in suffrage, but they did not satisfy her. Many debts had been incurred by her long illness. She felt that the only self-respecting thing to do was to help pay them off by going back to nursing.

Several doctors who gave their services to patients in the slums often called Mrs. Sanger. With pregnancy a chronic epidemic, cheap abortionists thrived. Or the women, when purgatives and teas failed, rolled down the stairs or brought on miscarriages by the use of rusty scissors, skewers or any pointed object they could lay their ignorant hands on. Those who did not die in agony lived on in fear and suffering, unfit to bear more children but unable to keep from doing so. And they all asked the same question, "What can I do to keep from it?"

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The nurse became obsessed with the desire to give them the answer they sought. Over and over in her mind she mulled a solution to their misery. Mrs. Sacks was the last straw. From that day on Margaret Sanger's life was consecrated to her mission.

Her first step was to fill in the gaps in her equipment. The whole spring and summer of 1913 were passed in search of information. Her mind became a catalogue of facts and figures on infant and maternal mortality. She could find little about contraceptive methods. The doctors to whom she went refused to reveal their secret, so she took a trip to France where physicians of standing gave her reliable instruction.

Her next necessity was support. Women's organizations, the medical fraternity and the welfare agencies, refused to listen to her. The doctors said it was against the law. The women were shocked. The feminists were either annoyed or amused. Determined to put her purpose before the public, she took what little money she had and started a magazine, *The Woman Rebel*, of which she was publisher, editor and business manager. The first issue was declared unmailable by the New York post office. As there was no contraceptive information in it, she wrote the postmaster asking him to point out where she had transgressed the law. In answer she received a copy of the first notification, nothing more. Wishing to bring the matter into the open and put the law to the test, she kept on publishing *The Woman Rebel*, placing copies of it in the mailbox with her own hands.

One August afternoon in 1914, two officers came to tell her that she had been indicted by the Federal grand jury for breaking the postal laws. They advised her to submit quietly. "I shall do nothing of the kind," she retorted, "I shall shout it from the housetops."

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She was not shouting when she said this; something in her manner impressed the officers, for they asked her to sit down and tell them what she was trying to do. They remained for two hours, during which she talked so persuasively of conditions that their attitude softened. They made no attempt to arrest her and said that her case would come up some time in October and they would let her know two weeks in advance.

In the middle of September she was haled into court where she was reprimanded for not being on hand that morning. She told the judge that she had not been notified. He swept the excuse aside, setting the trial for the next day. As she had not engaged a lawyer, she asked for more time in which to prepare her defense. It was refused.

That evening Margaret Sanger fought the situation out with herself. Because of the antagonistic attitude of the court she felt sure that she would be given a severe sentence. She was not afraid of jail, but a long term would retard her program. If she were to be cut off from it for any length of time, interest might wane. If she could only get away for a while, and public opinion could be aroused in her favor, the prejudice of the court might be tempered. Writing a letter to the judge telling him that she would not appear, she took the midnight train for Montreal and in a week sailed for England under an assumed name and without passport.

The world war was two months old. Aliens without passports were being refused entrance to England. Port officials refused to let her in. Appealing to two higher authorities — she has never disclosed their names — she was permitted to enter and continue on her journey to London.

Every day of her stay there was made to count. Have-

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lock Ellis became her guide and counsellor. For months she went regularly to the British Museum, learning about the movement in Europe. She found that in Holland, where contraceptive clinics flourished under government subsidy, the death rate had fallen from an average of 26 per 1,000 before they were started in 1878, to 12 per 1,000 in 1912. The tables on maternal and infant mortality gave the highest percentage of all civilized nations to the United States. The Netherlands, with the lowest, showed a continuous decline in the number of deaths among women and children in child-birth.

In September 1915, news came that William Sanger had been arrested and convicted for giving one of her pamphlets to a decoy sent to his studio by Anthony Comstock. Bound to put such arbitrary methods to the test, she returned home, notifying the Federal District Attorney of her whereabouts.

During her absence a change had taken place in the public mind. Men and women of prominence had become interested in her cause. Great newspapers were now her allies. Four days after her return William Sanger was released from jail. Protests were made to President Wilson — among them a letter from twelve English scientists and writers of international distinction. When her case came up for trial in February, 1916, it was dismissed.

She saw, then, that the time was right for a direct challenge. She knew that she would never get far by talking. Clinics were the real need. The American Birth-Control League was founded with Margaret Sanger as its president. To spread her gospel she took a trip across the continent. In Chicago, when the Women's City Club refused to hear her, the Labor Temple opened its doors to her. In St. Louis, she delivered her speech from an automobile. In Portland, where she was arrested and spent

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the night in jail, influential citizens came to her defense. By the time she was back in New York birth-control leagues had been founded in nearly every city where she had been.

With her sister and a devoted friend, she next opened the first Birth-Control Clinic in America, in Brownsville, a tenement district of Brooklyn. In less than a month 480 women were given help. Then Anthony Comstock came. Her sister was charged with disseminating contraceptive information, her friend with having sold an indecent book and Margaret Sanger with maintaining a public nuisance.

In January, 1917, her sister was found guilty and sentenced to 30 days in the workhouse. Released on bail pending trial, Mrs. Sanger re-opened the clinic and was re-arrested. The day her case was called the court was crowded with smartly gowned women and women from the tenements with their children and nursing babies. The trial was short. Margaret Sanger admitted the charge and was found guilty. Before passing sentence the Judge said, "The court is considering extreme clemency if you will promise that in the future you will respect the law." There was no compromise in her response. "I will refrain pending appeal," she said. "Farther than that I will not go." She was given 30 days.

During her incarceration she lost 12 pounds and tuberculosis again threatened. And yet on the day she was let out she gave the most amazing example in her whole career of her tremendous vitality. The order had been given that she was to be finger-printed. Two robust keepers struggled for two hours trying to force her fingers down on the pad. When this failed, one got behind her and held her while the other worked with her hands. "It was really funny," she told me not long ago. "I don't

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know where my strength came from. Every time they got my fingers almost down on the pad, through no effort of mine whatsoever, my wrists went up in the air in the most ridiculous gesture, or my fingers would fold up in a kind of spasm. And just when I felt as if I were going to faint, a telephone from headquarters ordered my release without the usual finger-printing."

The Court of Appeals in 1918 did exactly what she had hoped it would do. Judge Crane, who rendered the decision, although affirming the verdict of the lower court, declared that "The law, while not permitting physicians to advertise regarding such matter, or to give promiscuous advice to patients irrespective of their condition, is broad enough to protect the physician who, in good faith, gives such help or advice to a married person to cure or prevent disease." Going further he defined "disease," according to Webster as "an alteration in the state of the body, or some of its organs, interrupting or disturbing the performance of vital functions and causing or threatening pain, sickness, disease or disorder." This was the first time that the statute relating to contraceptives have been given judicial interpretation. It meant that birth-control clinics conducted by doctors could be maintained within certain limits.

With the fear of the law removed, physicians of standing offered their coöperation. Some medical fraternities, important women's organizations, and university professors endorsed birth-control. Many of the churches passed resolutions of support. From nearly every state in the Union came invitations to speak.

When the current of success was moving swiftly, Mrs. Sanger found time to answer the calls that had been coming to her from foreign lands. It required strategy to get into countries where militaristic governments demanded

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high birth-rates. Her first venture into forbidden fields was her visit to Japan in 1922. In San Francisco the Japanese Consul refused her a visa. Immediately she was on her toes; experience had taught her that official opposition is the whetstone of public curiosity. She secured a visa for China.

During the journey she met the editors of two important Japanese newspapers. They were so interested that they arranged to have her explain the whole scope of the birth-control movement to the Japanese delegation returning from the Washington Peace Conference. The result was that one of the delegates radioed to his government and got permission for her to enter Japan.

The efforts to exclude her had had the effect she had foreseen. When she debarked at Yokohama, instead of interviewing the returning delegates, the newspaper reporters crowded around her, and her activities were front page material throughout her stay. University groups formed a reception committee, parading the streets with banners proclaiming, "Thousands disciple welcome you." Labor organizations were at the pier to greet her. The Rickshaw Men's Union turned out in a body and one of its members who spoke English undertook to apologize for the Home Office. "Sometime," he said, "Japanese Government little autocratic." Her visit was the beginning of birth-control in Japan.

In 1933, fully aware of the dangers, she decided to enter Italy. Knowing that Margaret Sanger would never be allowed in, she took out her passport as Mrs. J. Noah Slee, her name by her second marriage. She felt that it would be indiscreet and hazardous to go to the larger cities of the south where someone might recognize her. So she went to a small village in the Dolomites where she was visited by her correspondents, women of the

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nobility and patronesses of great private philanthropies. Secret meetings were held. Thousands of pamphlets on birth-control were distributed from hand to hand through the crowded industrial districts of Italy. When the rumor came that her hide-out had been discovered, she took the night-train into Switzerland.

The following week Mussolini issued a violent manifesto against birth-control. Until then the peasants and the great mass of working women had never heard of it. With their curiosity aroused, they did some investigating. A year later the birth-rate of Italy dropped lower than it had ever been before.

Here in the United States the clinics are constantly enlarging their scope. To them come women of all classes, races and religions. Those who are financially able to do so, pay a fee. The unemployed and the very poor are helped without charge. When necessary, they are instructed in sex hygiene.

The Clinical Research Bureau in New York City has given relief from unhealthful child-bearing to over fifty-five thousand women during the past ten years. Since 1930 new patients have come in at the rate of five hundred a month. (Twenty-eight per cent of the women who have applied for help are of the Roman Catholic faith.)

The case records are a volume of the same story told many times. There is Maria, thirty-nine years old. She has been married twenty-two years and has had sixteen pregnancies. Ten of these were aborted, five of which brought her to the hospital and made an invalid of her. She bore only five living children, one of whom died in infancy. Her husband is a riveter with intermittent employment.

Margaret Sanger's dream goes far beyond anything that her enemies, who have so often accused her of min-

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istering to sins of the flesh, might suspect. "There is too much license in marriage," she says, "just as there is too much suppression. There is great spiritual power in the sexual urgency. Through its restraint, its energies may be directed into highly creative channels both in the parents and their offspring."

The Utopia she envisions can come, she holds, only through the regulation of fertility. For she feels that no society can withstand the impact of an unrestrained fecundity by which vast numbers of its people are cut off, through poverty and dereliction, from the refining influences of education and plenty.

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The Unreality of Realism

BY JOHN MASON BROWN

THE CONTEMPORARY theatre has become so expert at disguising the falsities it offers in the name of realism that many playgoers have grown accustomed to respecting it in inverse proportion to its character as "theatre". When they go to a playhouse they do not want to be made too conscious of the fact that they are in a playhouse. Giving their half-faith to what they like to believe is real, they do not wish to be reminded by a chorus of its unreality. The very word "theatrical" has turned in their vocabulary into a term of abuse. It is a significant term which not only summarizes the credo of the modern stage but paints the ideal of its make-believe by condemning the theatre for being too much like itself and too little like life.

The Muse most commonly invoked by this theatre which prides itself on its realism is not "a Muse of fire that would ascend The brightest heaven of invention." She is no goddess but a mortal proud of her mortality. Her feet are on the ground even if her head is not in the clouds. She is a lusty democrat whose respect for kings is small; an incurable individualist who has no understanding of the self-effacing principles dear to totalitarian states. The earth, not heaven, is her abode.

She roams it freely, preferring drawing-rooms to Olympus, kitchens to palaces, gas-jets to torches, beer to ambrosia, and avoiding heroes and the heroic in favor of the common man and conditions which are common to all men. More than Thalia and Melpomene ever dreamed of being, this plain-spoken Muse, who wears such clothes as can be seen in daily life and employs only such words

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as are used by real people, is an incomparable mistress of all the arts of deception.

By dedicating herself to what seems to be true rather than to what is patently untrue but might be possible, she tells a lie such as they never dreamed of telling. Where they rejoiced in the golden falsehoods they were spreading and asked their hearers to rejoice in the general truths made possible by their disregard of particulars, she is willing to kiss the Bible and swear, in the name of all the visual and aural evidence she has at her command, that what she tells is the truth, the whole truth, and almost nothing but the truth. So successful is she in her documented perjuries that often the productions offered in her name are precisely those which so hide their "invention" that they seem to belong, not to the world of the imagination but to the reality of facts where "invention" is unnecessary.

This modern Muse tricks her worshippers into wholehearted belief by substituting a tattered bedroom slipper for the Tragic Buskin; by coloring the mask of comedy with flesh tints and shielding its grotesque grin from the public view with her own protective hands. The symbols which she labors to persuade playgoers to accept as hers are the dictaphone and the camera. Of course, she does not use them. She is far too artful for that. But she pretends to do so. She feigns to rely upon them with such regularity and have such faith in their methods, and is able to achieve so many astonishing resemblances to reality in their name, that playgoers are not only apt, but glad, to forget how cunningly deceptive she is.

Does not Sadie Thompson, luxuriating in phrases which become her profession, turn on the Rev. Davidson in *Rain* to call him a "dirty two-faced mutt" and a "psalm-singing son-of-a-bitch"? Above the roar of ele-

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vated trains and the familiar noises of New York's sidewalks cannot the poor residents of the tenement house in *Street Scene* be heard agreeing, on the blistering June night on which the play opens, that it is the humidity one minds more than the heat? Do not the Millers in *Ah, Wilderness!* eat steaming bluefish off real plates while the whole family snickers at father for telling a story about saving the life of a drowning man which he has told a thousand times before? Does not Dr. Hochberg in *Men in White* ask for the scalpel only after he and his white-robed assistants have gone through every minute detail of the "sterile" or "aseptic" technique which is a ritual known to the operating rooms of all modern hospitals? Can not torrents of rain be seen dripping from the portico of St. Paul's Church in *Pygmalion?* Is not the dirt visible in *Tobacco Road* and the crunch of the snow audible under the feet of the characters in *Ethan Frome?* Do not most of our actors, when they gesture at all, employ only such gestures as are natural to the bankers and the gangsters, the cops and the debutantes, the ministers and the molls who sit in the audience? Are there not countless proofs in the writing, acting, setting, lighting, costuming and directing of most contemporary plays which take pains to advertise the modern theatre's closeness to reality?

In the face of such testimony can anyone deny the reality of that theatre? Or accuse it of lying? Or contend that, in order to believe in it, contemporary playgoers have no other choice than to suspend their disbelief? Or maintain that it, no less than the theatre of the Elizabethans, depends upon the spectators' willingness to "make imaginary puissance"? Or insist that its make-believe is subject to conventions which, though less rigid and resulting in an entirely different style, are no less

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marked or important than are those which corset the classical stages of China and Japan?

The answer to all of these questions is, as goes without saying, an emphatic "yes." In spite of its surface realism, our realistic theatre comes no closer to reality than a blown kiss does to a true one. Regardless of how conscientious it may be in camouflaging them, it works incessantly in terms of substitutes, the palpable unreality of which does no harm to its illusion only because audiences are prepared either to ignore them or accept them.

We are so accustomed to the conventions of our stage, and are so used to meeting the demands which they make upon our credence, that we are apt to forget their existence. We know they are sprung from the limitations of the theatre as a medium. We know they represent the organized common sense under which our world of make-believe is granted the right to solve its problems for our pleasure, and hence given its mandate to function. We are well aware that these conventions exist as wilful lapses in what we know to be the logic of things as they are, which we allow to pass unchallenged in order that the appearance of these things can be achieved in terms of that special logic which is the theatre's. Our very familiarity with them, as well as our desire for what they alone can make possible, lulls in us the questions to which, in the name of realism, they might otherwise give rise. Their acceptance demands no more conscious effort on our part than does the once-learned process of tying a shoe. They were fashioned, and subscribed to, in order to make belief possible, and they succeed in so doing by making it automatic.

The only theatrical conventions we are apt to notice are those which, by being new to our experience, force themselves into our consciousness. Their very novelty is

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instructive. By compelling us to be aware of the rules under which the theatre's historic game of "let's pretend" has been played in other lands and ages, it invites us to remember the equally well-established rules under which it continues to be played in the supposedly realistic theatre of our own day.

At the opera, where speech is assumed to be song and every boudoir is equipped with an orchestra; in a ballet, where grace endows mutes with an eloquence which transcends words; on hearing the communal odes of a Greek chorus; when Hamlet not only speaks blank verse as M. Jourdain spoke prose, but proceeds to talk it to himself even when, like Bunthorne, he is "alone and unobserved"; at the Comedie, when a French actor, after thundering forth the Alexandrines of Corneille and Racine, pauses frankly for applause upon reaching the couplet which climaxes his great tirade; in the company of Congreve's dandies, whose handkerchief-twirlings, walk and manner must match their phrases in artificial elegance; upon encountering, after many seasons of realistic settings, the wings, painted backdrops and hooded footlights which are brought forth for a revival of *Uncle Tom* or a melodrama by Boucicault; or when confronted with the aggressively unreal gymnastics which create a style of their own in some of Meierhold's productions in Soviet Russia; we become conscious — in proportion to our lack of familiarity with what is being seen — of the different forms which theatrical make-believe can take under different conventions.

None of these conventions is difficult to accept. Nor does the acceptance of most of them require more time than did Mr. O'Neill's use of masks in *The Great God Brown* or of "the stream of consciousness" in *Strange Interlude*. Yet to varying degrees they are different enough

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from the conventions of our own theatre to call attention to themselves. Their strangeness compels us to look beyond what is being done in the productions they have shaped, and consider both the reason for and the manner of its doing. By making us mindful of the importance of other theatrical conventions they may even recall to our minds the importance of those no less artificial, but usually ignored conventions, by means of which our realistic theatre is permitted to achieve its illusion of reality.

In spite of all its oaths, its gas-jets, its crunching snow, its family dinners, its Bronx homes and Long Island drawing-rooms, its chatter about the heat and the humidity, and its slouching actors who keep their hands in their pockets, ours is a theatre which is as much at the mercy of its audiences' will to make believe as was the theatre of the Elizabethans and the Greeks, or as is the superbly stylized and defiantly unreal theatre of Mei Lan Fang. It may turn its back upon their franker forms of artifice. It may have substituted cunning for their candor. It may have discarded their styles and evolved a style of its own. It may pretend to belong to life and disavow the medium through which it reflects it. The ideal, which colors its selections and explains its methods, may be the literal representation of reality. But the reality which it achieves so laboriously is no more than our realistic theatre's major illusion.

Unless we admit that — and admit it gladly — we betray at once how fundamental is our misunderstanding of the modern theatre and its realism. To mistake its illusion too completely for reality is to pay life a compliment which should go to those who have imitated it. It is to deny ourselves the most genuine pleasures with which play-going can reward us. For the joys known to play-

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goers are joys born of the theatre's illusions. It is in terms of the means by which these illusions are created that the theatre takes its place, and is judged, as an art. It's not a world that is condemned to unreality but that exults in it, and continues to exult in it, regardless of how carefully it may seek to reproduce the appearance of reality.

Unless we comprehend the nature of modern theatre's lies we can never fully appreciate the value of its truths. Its lies are constant reminders of the character of the medium in which its truths are advanced. In as much as they signify the conventions under which the search for its particular kind of truth is encouraged, they paint the image of its audiences' expectations, and hence of its artists' aims. They also betoken the various techniques which have been developed as solutions to the problems of suggesting the appearance of truth in the theatrical medium we nowadays know. If we would understand that medium we must realize that in order to be true to life it must be even truer to itself. Our custom is to pretend that it is equally true to both. In doing this we only show that we are still able to match the theatre's pretense with a pretense of our own; to counter its efforts at illusion with our desire for it.

Belief is made easier for us than it was for playgoers in the time of the Elizabethans and the Greeks, or than it is in the traditional theatre of Mei Lan Fang. It is, too, a different kind of belief that we are asked to contribute. We go to a theatre in which almost everything seems to have been done for us. Our imaginations are not called upon to play the active parts they once were. We no longer have to *hear* scenery as they did in the age of Shakespeare. Words have been so reinforced by what convinces the eye that they neither have, nor need to

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have, the power of complete persuasion which formerly was theirs. No characters in our productions step with ceremonious flourishes over unseen doorsteps, or climb upon undraped chairs when they are supposed to be crossing a mountain, as they do in the stylized theatre of China. Nor do they hide their faces behind amplifying masks and wear high shoes to intone the mighty verses assigned by the Attic dramatists to the legendary sufferers.

Our make-believe is so factual that it asks us to forget it is make-believe and pretend to think it is what it seems so near to being. But notwithstanding the numberless details by means of which it counterfeits reality, it remains arrogantly unreal. The basis of its illusion continues to be, not genuine belief, but the perilous, because voluntary, suspension of disbelief which Coleridge had in mind.

The mere fact that we foregather as one of many, facing a stage, upon which, at an announced time each evening or matinee, a curtain will go up to reveal, for our group interest, a number of people involved in a set of sad or happy circumstances which are supposed to occur in private, and from which we know that we, as well as they, will be released within approximately two hours' time, ought to warn us that what we are going to see is that arrangement of life known as theatre, and not life itself. It may please us to think the room in which these people meet is as real as are the fireplace, the windows, the curtains, the rug, the chairs and the sofa it contains. But, though we like to fool ourselves, we are not really fooled by it. We know, as surely as the Chinese know that a real door has a doorstep, that a real room does not have three walls. Yet, like the Chinese, we give our belief to a scenic gesture. The only difference is that

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where they choose to have their doorstep completed in the pantomime of an actor, we choose to have our room left incomplete in the setting of a designer.

We are undisturbed by this incompleteness, because instinctively we realize that, even in our realistic theatre, an audience is the fourth wall needed by a room. We do not stop to think that, with the raising of the curtain we have been invited to peer into a house inhabited by strange people who refuse to take any notice of the hurricane, which by robbing their home of a wall, has exposed them to the public view. Our common sense, which is so often our contemporary substitute for imagination, silences our misgivings at once, by telling us that, were it not for the removal of that wall, we might as well have stayed in our own homes. On the basis of necessity, we accept its absence — and forget it.

There are a thousand other ways in which our realistic theatre deviates no less obviously from reality without raising our objections. The truth is we are only too glad to have it do so. We know the people in the wall-less room we see are not the people they say they are, but actors, repeating words as if they had just thought of them, which a playwright has written down for them to learn. We know that even when they seem to be speaking in their own rights, they are reflecting the mind and style of an author. We know when they stand up, sit down, or cross the stage, it is not impulse but most probably a director who has told them exactly what to do and when to do it.

Regardless of how real it may seem, we know the speech these people use is like no speech ever heard in daily life; that, since it is spoken by characters rather than by men and women, it has ceased to be conversation and been turned into dialogue, with all the differences in

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stress, pruning, arrangement, concentration, and heightening that that implies. With LeMaitre we are all too well aware that every time people meet in life they do not have something to say to one another which is of importance to themselves or worthy of the attention of others. With Congreve we share the conviction that "if a poet should steal a dialogue of any length from the ex tempore discourse of the two wittiest men upon earth, he would find that scene but coldly received by the town."

We know that no people are as articulate about grief as the people in our wall-less room are apt to be if they meet with disaster, just as we know that if they are gay, the only people who can think up such clever things to say as they do without a moment's hesitation are after-dinner speakers when they have reached home. We know that no events in life are as neatly ordered as is that arbitrary selection of incidents which we climactically arranged as a plot. We know that no people are disturbed only by such worries as those, however terrific they may be, which a playwright has singled out to overtake the simplified men and women we are watching. We know that life does not divide itself into acts; that actual "scenes" are not built from the same blue-prints which are used for theatrical scenes; that five days cannot have passed during the time a curtain has been lowered and raised. We know that a man who starts out by being twenty at eight-thirty cannot really have become fifty by eleven; and that the gangster who is shot in the second act, or the leading lady who coughs her way to heaven in the third, is no more dead than we are.

We know that all lovers are neither young nor good-looking; that wedding bells do not settle all difficulties; and that men and women do not always have the happy faculty of appearing at just the right moment or of

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hearing merely what they are meant to hear. We know that members of the same family remember much more about themselves than do those amiable amnesiacs upon whom we are eavesdropping in the wall-less room, and whose custom it is to remind one another, for our benefit, of details with which they must be thoroughly familiar. We know that in real life friends cannot all arrive at one place within five minutes after they have been summoned on the phone; that people work and are not always free for purposes of dialogue and plot; and that a single hooded lamp on a table does not cast enough light to illumine everything within thirty feet of it. We know that pianists, who are supposed to be as great as Paderewski, do not sound as if they were playing the pianola when they finger a keyboard; that opera singers can often sing; and that it is the surprising habit of real ballet dancers to be able to dance.

Yet as playgoers we cheerfully suspend our knowledge of what we know to be true in these and countless other instances, in order to suspend our disbelief in a theatre which is admired for its realism. If we demanded of that theatre the realism to which it pretends, we would sign its death warrant. In spite of its gewgaws and its knick-knacks, and the ways in which it attempts to anchor itself to the appearance of reality, it is still a world of conscious illusion; of imaginary puissance in which, without waiting for or needing the invitation of a chorus, we are eager to piece out its imperfections with our thoughts.

Its realism is merely the style in which it endeavors to lend persuasion to its particular form of illusion. What matters far more than that style, important as it unquestionably is in confessing the objectives and establishing the methods of the kind of theatre which is offered in its

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name, is that illusion is its aim, and that the theatre is the medium in which it seeks to achieve it. It is worthwhile for us, as playgoers, to recall the unreality of realism if only to realize how inseparably it is linked to the medium it takes such pains to deny.

That medium itself, regardless of how it may be used, is in the last analysis what counts. Unless we have a *sense* of it, and of its special possibilities, we are lost in the theatre. What is of paramount importance to us there is not what is offered in the name of realism or romanticism, impressionism or naturalism, but what succeeds in being "real theatre," regardless of the name under which it travels. To achieve their ends all of these equally welcome forms of illusion must be "theatrical" in the true and happy sense of being faithful to the medium which is common to them all.

Perhaps in this way, and in this way only, can we come to see realism in its true perspective in the theatre's scheme of things. When we do so, we begin to share Galsworthy's conviction that whether the violet comes from Russia, from Parma, or England, matters little. We begin to comprehend how right he was when he wrote "close by the Greek temples at Paestum, there are violets that seem redder, and sweeter, than any ever seen — as though they had sprung up out of the footprints of some old pagan goddess; but under the April sun, in a Devonshire lane, the little blue scentless violets capture every bit as much of the spring. And so it is with the drama — no matter what its form — it need only be the 'real thing,' need only to have caught some of the precious fluids, revelation, or delight and imprisoned them within a chalice to which we may put our lips and continually drink."

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Bergamot

AUDREY WURDEMANN

I had forgot
The smell of bergamot,
Until I saw the word
Printed upon a page some poet made,
And what he wrote
Stirred
Behind my senses, sloughed the coloured coat
Of memory, layer by layer, year by year,
And set out clear
The hour,
The purple blade,
The sticky small green flower,
The whole experience of that scented spot
I had forgot.

There was a field
With stiff saw-grasses that caught above my knees,
And I was scarce as tall as the tallest of these.
Within that field there grew
Four quince trees, fuzzy-leaved, the tart fruit sealed
Under tenacious fur. The smell of ripening quince
Also is with me since.

There, too,
Was one vast cherry tree with boughs that swung
Easily to a child's small arms, and the cherries that hung

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In that great tree were shadowy-cold and sweet,
Save where the sun slanted yellow through tilted leaves, and its heat
Made the warmed fruit more sweet.
There were hornets there, and the papery tatterdemalion
Houses they tangled the trees with, and there were flies
With the sound of the sun in their buzz. And there was a young stallion,
Newly a colt, staring over the fence-rails with fiery unflinching eyes.
And the grasses were summer-scented, edged like a saw. . . . I had forgot
How far away is that place of the bergamot!

The sun was hot on my hair
When I came there,
At the edge of the fence, under a bank of broom,
And knelt in the deep leaf-loam, the twig-crackling mold
Sudden with rain,
Soiling my knees, soiling my clothes and my hands with its stain,
And the flowers of the broom dropped, fragrant and fruitful, dripped, scarlet and glowing, spilled basketfuls of gold.
There, among the fair ruin of lilies, the half-mouldered earlier comers, the hyacinths' tomb,
Were the small square sprouts of the bergamot, just beginning to bloom.

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Flushed with faint purple, hairy-leaved, heavily scented,
Medicinal, oily and fragrant, the herb sent its stems
Upward in shadow, sticky with diadems
Spun by the undergrowth spinners. And there I knelt,
Curious and contented,
On the damp earth and felt
The leaves of the bergamot with adventurous fingers,
Tasting the dark secret spice of it. That taste lingers
Over thyme and rosemary, lavender and the false sea-
lavender.
It comes so far
That when I saw the mere name of it, bergamot,
I remembered the whole of that lost little world that I
had forgot.

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That Little Tune of Mine

CHARLES MARTIN

ACROSS the street from the barber shop where I work, cars constantly glide into a place between two red and white signs on the curb that say "Parking Five Minutes Only." Over there is the post-office. It was white when they first built it, but it's streaky with gray and brown now from the way rainwater drains off the roof and upper window-sills.

Often when there's nothing else to do, no one wants a shine and most of the barbers are busy, I stand looking over the short curtain stretched across the glass front and watch the building and the cars that come constantly. I see people rush out of them, leap up the steps and disappear beyond the heavy doors to return later empty-handed and hurrying or shuffling letters and cards of different sizes, not looking where they're going, rushing back down the steps to the sidewalk where they pause, look up, brighten with recognition when they see the car they came in and then dash to it.

Every time this happens I have a large thought: These are men, these are busy men. They are busy doing something I don't know anything about and I wonder if it matters very much in the end.

Words don't show what I really think. Maybe words cannot. It might be better if I say it is a long low tone sounding in me like a violin, pressed by their fingers and brought out by the bowing action of their lives from frog to point and back again, over and over incessantly.

Sometimes my eyes fall on my own hands lightly gripping the brass rod from which the short curtain hangs. I stare at them a long time, until they change from

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the color of coffee with a little cream in it to a shallow purple. Smaller things come into my head then. I've often seen such hands nimble on the shining valves of musical horns and I feel hot and good in a rush remembering the smooth notes rolling out of the curved bellies of cornets and saxophones.

At nights when I had no date, there never used to be anything to do. Wearily, almost, I would leave the house after supper and go stand around on the street with the other shine-boys and bellhops off duty and the fellows that worked at the docks and in warehouses and mowed people's lawns. I would get tired of the way they talked and ask Pete and Harvey if they didn't want to go over to Lacy's house and fool around with the piano. Usually we'd go, and that's how we got started on the idea of getting up an orchestra.

I had a violin. My mother never would let me call it a fiddle. Harvey could play 'cello pretty good and Lacy knew how to make good jazz noises come out of any wind-instrument, brass or woodwind no matter which. Pete used his banjo-uke to keep the rhythm going. Lacy's sister was the one who could play the piano, but we didn't want any girls in the orchestra. It wasn't long before we had a piano-player from one of the fellows who used to hang around the streets with the rest of us, and not long after that we had to start turning them down right and left because practicing wasn't so bad when you got used to it and it was something to do at night instead of just dragging around when you're apt to think up some kind of devilment and get thrown in jail.

At nights now there is either practice or we're playing for someone's party. It was at one of those parties at the country club that I had a very funny experience with a white boy and his girl friend. I knew him pretty well be-

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cause he always come to the barber shop where I work to get his hair cut, and sometimes when he looked like he was feeling good about something shut up behind thick doors inside, he would also get shaved and have a massage and a shoe-shine. But shine or not, he always gave me a dime right before he left the shop. He had a funny way of talking, short and clipped. Nervous and not bad looking, he would come into the shop as if he were lost sometimes, look around like a scared cat ready to jump and run the minute anyone stirred a foot. Other times — when he was going to get the shave and massage and shoe-shine — he'd whip through the door slim as a blade, his head high, the quick unsteady eyes all over the place flashing, a little closed-up smile at his mouth. But he never gave me more than a dime.

One day when I was watching the cars in front of the post-office hurry into the parking-space, people hurry out and back and drive off, a tune began to pester me. It was the kind that keeps on pestering me too if I don't sing it out or hear it somewhere or do something to forget it. It was hard for me to come back to myself when Mr. Benny finished shaving the man he had in his chair, and I couldn't remember which was his coat on the rack when I went to get it. After that I had a hard time all day trying to do things right.

"What's the matter, Shine?" the barbers would kid me, "You look like your best girl married the other guy."

"No, it ain't that," I told them. I grinned about it and felt funny. I kept wanting to whistle the tune to them and find out what it was. I hadn't ever heard it before and I didn't know where it had come from. But I was afraid to ask them about it. Once during that first day I did whistle it, giving a shine to some old fellow in Mr. Jerry's chair, and somebody asked me what the name of that was.

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"That's what I'd like to know," I told him.

Little by little that day and the next two or three weeks it began to leave me alone for short whiles, then it would come on back worse and more of it. I began to hear it like it was being played on a piano, then, naturally I put in the rest of our orchestra with a special, fancy part for me on the violin. I tried out my part of it on the violin when I'd happen to be alone at home, and I found out I knew it pretty well. I could play it and I'd never even heard the song anywhere I knew of. It was all right, though. It was a good tune.

Well, little by little I began to figure out a way to teach it to the horns by playing their part on my violin, and then they'd pick it up by ear. All of them liked it. Pete was the first one to find out what was the matter.

"Say, how in hell's anyone going to dance to a thing like that?" he asked, mad as hell. You see, he kept time for us because I didn't like the drums pounding like wadded clockwork on this thing. I was figuring a way to bring them in every now and then, and there was one place where cymbals were going to sound fine.

I hadn't thought about anyone dancing to it, I just liked the tune so well I forgot about what it might be used for. But I didn't want them to quit working on it, so I cleared up my face and said, "Hell, good dancers can dance to anything."

"I don't see how no one's going to dance to this," Pete went on, stubborn as a bull. "It ain't a waltz, and it sure as hell don't stick to two-four time like it oughta. Some places so slow you could lay down and take a nap between beats and other spots so damn fast ain't no one in this town could move their feet to fit it."

"Oh it's a good tune anyhow," Lacy said. "Let's work it up. It sure ain't hurting us none, is it?"

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"You don't know where you got this here thing from?" Pete asked me, being cute.

"No, but good gosh Pete, you been doing all right with it. . . ."

"I just kinda hoped you knew where it come from so you could go give it back. We got to work it up now, we gone too far to quit, but when in hell we going to play it? Ain't no one in this town can dance to it, I'm telling you."

Then I talked to them. I begged them to go on and work it up just like I wanted and I promised Pete specially that I'd find some time to play it and let it make a hit. Pete needed money worse than the rest of us those days, and that was why he hated to waste time practicing something we might not be able to use. There was plenty of competition from other orchestras around town, and we had to keep up with all the latest music to hold the place we'd climbed to. We got pretty good pay playing for parties, specially those out at the country club, and Pete wanted to make sure we didn't lose out on anything.

Anyhow, we worked up the tune until they were playing it just like I'd heard it in my head, and I kept worrying about some way to make it all right with Pete again. He wasn't sore at me much, but when you need money bad and someone makes you waste time as a favor to him, you feel hard about it. I wanted to show him the tune was worth something. Then Lacy — Lacy was really our manager, he got all the engagements for us — told me one afternoon we were going to play for a dinner-dance out at the country club. I thought fine. I'll play that piece while they're eating and give it a chance to soak in. It ought to make a hit. Somebody'll come over and give us some money. I'll give my share to

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Pete so he'll feel all right about me and the tune again.

I was sure it was going to go over big. I wasn't even a little bit worried.

They had the country club pretty well decorated for their dinner-dance. It looked nice. The tables for dinner were laid out at angles in the rooms that come before the ballroom with plenty of space for everyone at each table. When we came in, I looked around and guessed: two hundred people. They put us in a corner of the ballroom far from the door to the other rooms where they were going to eat, and after a while I was afraid they weren't going to want us to play during dinner, but the man in charge came up and told me about it. He just wanted a few pieces he said, so no one would think the orchestra had gone home.

Playing for dances and parties around town I'd gotten to know a lot of faces, some of them appeared at every party I ever played for. Whenever I'd look out over the floor between pieces I'd see one of the faces I knew, and then all of a sudden I saw this nervous fellow that always gave me a dime when he came to the shop. He was feeling good. His eyes shone quick this way and that, and he walked proudly out onto the floor with a blonde girl in a black and white dress and danced with her right off.

I'd never seen him at any of the parties we played for before. After a while he came over and asked Pete what orchestra we were. Pete told him, but he never even glanced back at me standing with my violin in my hand. He walked off with that girl in black and white and danced with her most of the time.

The thing had started at eight-thirty, but they didn't serve dinner until ten. It was a loud party, everyone nearly drunk and plenty of crazy dancing. The ballroom at the country club has a hollow sound to it anyhow, and

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with these people in it, it kept ringing like sheets of brass too thick for cymbals, like a hanging metal sign at a filling-station worried by wind and rain battering on it from one side.

When they went out to dinner in the other rooms, I thought sure that as soon as they'd get settled things would quiet down enough to give my tune a chance to soak in. We fooled around with a couple of pieces, but it wasn't much fun playing in the empty ballroom far off from the tables and I felt pretty sure they weren't listening or couldn't hear us even if they tried. I began to worry and get a little nervous. I'd counted on putting my tune over that night and making Pete feel different toward me and it. I don't like to have someone feeling hard toward me.

"Don't you want to play that tune tonight while they're eating?" asked Lacy.

"I want to, all right," I said, "but I don't think they'd even hear it way over yonder and raising all that hell like they're doing." I was pretty bitter. Lacy looked at me hard.

"We'll wait a while. Maybe they'll quiet down."

But they didn't. We kept on waiting, and I began to get worse and worse and hit awful some notes. We fooled around with "Sweet Sue" and we played a new arrangement I'd worked out for "Mood Indigo." No one even peeped into the ballroom and the noise over in those other rooms kept up and even got worse with dishes and forks and knives clanking and all that. Finally people began to straggle out into the ballroom smoking, talking to one another and I knew dinner was over. We were just about to begin playing "St. Louis Blues" when I got excited and pushed the music aside on my stand. "Get the new tune. Snap it up. The new tune. Remember it?"

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I was trembling all over and got out in front of them to start them off with lifting my bow. They had to start all together or it wouldn't work. I lifted the bow and the first blast was just as sweet as I could ever have asked. Then I got lost in the wonder of that tune I had never heard except in my head one day about two months ago. It wiggled around me like the opening gestures of a savage dancer. It swept me up like a lot of dusty trash down a street with the sun shining full force on it. I felt all over the great uselessness of cars rushing expectantly up in front of the post-office across the street from the barber shop where I work, rushing there and people leaping up the broad shallow steps and returning empty-handed or with letters of different sizes, absorbed in them or with just one and a smile, or with only one and a frown.

In the long deep-down waves of the horns and the top-ripples from my violin, brought out into meaning by my music, I knew all the heavy and light and burning and freezing secrets of those people across the street. I knew what happened in them when news came from lovers and from friends and from powerful people who were going to help or give something or hinder or ruin them. I could see their hope dash up behind their eyes like limber branches flung skyward in a burst of wind, the leaves on fire with sunlight. In the somber rolling of my music I could hear their shut-up terror break far and echoing, cold, huge and lost in the dismal grottoes, lightless beneath the earth.

The shaking thin wood of my violin became the joy and fear, the love, the anger, the hatred and promise of endless peace that made those people's hands tremble an instant on the handles of their car doors before they stopped up their feelings and got ready to drive away.

I could see the children waiting restlessly in the cars,

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and once in a while a dog staring out of a back window, his tongue like a wet red rag dripping out of his mouth, quivering between his lower long teeth and the thin black lip. I could see women and men, young, old and in-between waiting out there in front of the post-office too, and I knew what they were feeling. Something for me? For me? A love scrawl, a contemptuous refusal, a warm current of talk fixed forever to a sheet of paper. A secret to cuddle in a corner with and hug to their hearts. . . . Or nothing. Nothing. . . . ? No-o-o . . . sang the G-string of my violin. Not a thing. So fold your fluttering expectancy; put it away. Tear it down and throw it away, said the cadenza I had fixed up for my special fancy part of the tune.

And then it was ended. Twice the horns blew out something like when someone great is coming. Twice they fell down ripples of stone and then a sweet melody broke where it fell, tried to get up like a delicate thing stricken, failed and it was ended.

I was sweating furiously and shaking all over. The neck of my violin was dripping and the chinrest had a little pool in it. My cheeks were burning right under my eyes and my eyes themselves were on fire and covered with film so that everything reeled and contorted in front of me. I was very, very happy. Every time I remember it, it seems to me that I was never that happy before in my whole life.

Nothing happened. My eyes cleared. No one had even noticed and I felt Pete's eyes on me strong and hateful, but I couldn't look at him. I knew what he was thinking, all that time gone to hell and not even any applause for it, let alone money. I stared out at those indifferent people scattered in groups over the shining ballroom talking to each other exactly as if nothing at all had happened.

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Not one of them moved toward us smiling and reaching in his pocket as they sometimes did for special arrangements and things like that.

No one even turned his head our way. I wanted to scream at them and tell them I was going to play it over again. They hadn't listened, they couldn't have listened or someone, or all of them, every last one of them would have smiled and clapped hands, they would have all come over and given us something for music like that. We'd played it well, I knew we'd played it well, and there they all stood, absorbed in one another, not one of them even looking our way.

All of a sudden this nervous guy with the quick eyes and his blonde date in the black and white satin dress came whipping out of the room where they'd eaten dinner. He dragged her straight for us. He was drunk as could be and still walk. He came up, his head low like a charging animal's, and his face was wild and serious.

"What was the name of that piece?" he shouted at all of us, his eyes switching like flashes from one to the other. "What was the name of it?" He glared for a second at Pete only.

Pete nodded nastily back at me, in my place again. "You better ask him back there with the fiddle. He's the wise guy knows all about it."

The eyes came to rest on me. I was kind of scared then. A thousand awful things rushed into my imagination.

"What's the name of it?" he asked me.

"I don't know sir," I said, my voice shaky. "I just kept hearing it in my head. . . ."

"You got a copy of it here?" he snatched the closed banjo-uke part of "St. Louis Blues" off Pete's stand, saw what it was and slapped it back.

"No sir, I never made a copy of it. . . . I just kept

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hearing it in my head." I didn't know what else to say.

"You kept hearing it in your head. . . . !" He stared at me as if he couldn't see. I guess he couldn't, not very well anyhow, he was so drunk.

"Yes sir."

He clenched his fists so hard the blonde's little hand, peeping through the dark crook of his rumpled elbow, trembled. "Oh the deaf idiots!" His voice dropped, but it shook up a tremor in Harvey's 'cello next to me.

"They didn't like it worth a damn, did they?" Pete was sassy.

The nervous guy hardly noticed him. He kept trying to see me with his jigging eyes. "Boy, don't you know you've composed something?" he yelled at me. "But what the hell'd you play it here for? Don't you know it isn't dance music? You poor, ignorant. . . . It's dream music!" He laughed. Then he got kind of quiet again. "You don't know how to write music . . . notes, I mean?"

"No sir."

"Any of you know?" The eyes raked all our faces.

"No sir." I answered him again.

"You . . . you won't forget it, will you?" He looked scared, he looked worried, and in a low voice he said to himself, "If I weren't so damned drunk!" chipping the words off roughly.

"No sir, I can't forget it. I've got it all in my head. . . ."

"I can write music. How can I get in. . ." His jigging eyes stopped a second, still and somber. "Oh! You're the boy who works in the barber shop! Fine! I'll be down tomorrow and we'll fix it up then. I'm too damned drunk to do anything now."

I was scared of him yet and I didn't know what to think, but I saw he was about to go away, so I got up nerve enough to ask him what we wanted to know most

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of all. "Say, mister . . . any chance of making some money out of it?"

"You poor devil," he said in that funny way he talks, "no. You can't make a cent with that kind of music. You don't get anything out of it."

"But . . ." Pete was looking at me. Pete was looking at me hard. "Don't you like it, Mister?" I begged. "How come we can't make any money out of it?"

"Because I haven't got any money to give you," he said hard and fast, "and there's nobody else here who even heard you. Most of these people — Hell, most of the world — are deaf idiots and the rest are just deaf. That's why you can't make any money out of it, see? . . . I'll come down to the barber shop tomorrow."

All the while the blonde girl didn't say a thing. I glanced at her. She thought the nervous guy was fine. He took her off with him quickly, mumbling to her about being so damned drunk. I glanced at Pete. Pete hates me. He started then and he's kept on ever since. He thinks I did him a dirty trick. I can't find out how the others feel about it. They never say anything one way or the other, they don't talk about it at all.

Sure enough, the next afternoon the nervous guy came to the barber shop. I shined his shoes while he told me how we would work it to write out the music for my tune. Right before he left, he gave me a dime, mechanically.

We're working on the tune now, almost every night at his house where there's a fine piano, and as long as we actually are working I feel grand, but when we quit and I go off alone I feel like it's no use, it's no use at all. But I'm learning how to write music, and the other day when I was staring at my hands on the shining rod that holds up the curtain across the glass front at the barber shop, I heard a new tune.

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The Tragic Failure of Pacifism

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

FOR MORE than a generation organized pacifism has been with us. Since 1918 it has been everywhere. Billboards and drug store counters carry its message, while its literature falls from the printing presses of the world in a continuous cascade. Tens of thousands give time or money to work for peace. Millions sign peace petitions.

And yet within living memory there has been no secure and lasting peace. Since 1871 Europe has been an armed camp. Just before the turn of the century came the Spanish American War, followed in quick succession by the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War. In 1911 Italy fought Turkey, next year the Christian Balkan states took another fall out of the Sultan, the year after that the aforesaid Balkan states fought among themselves. In 1914 there began four years of conflict on a scale such as the planet had never seen, until the dead are counted in tens of millions. Nor did the Armistice ring down the curtain; Bolshevik Russia invaded Poland, France bloodily suppressed rebellion in Syria, both France and Spain did the like in Morocco. Japan has repeatedly attacked China, and today her patrols are exchanging shots with the Russians across the Manchurian border. Paraguayan and Bolivian blood has flowed in the Chaco. As these lines are written, Italy is consolidating her position in Ethiopia. Rearmament has become the chief business of Germany; indeed armaments increase everywhere. In a world utterly weary of war pacifism has failed and promises to fail even more abjectly.

Moreover the failure is tragic. To be sure, all tragedy

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has its comic relief. Fussy females, themselves far from saintly, indeed full of the imperfections flesh is heir to, solemnly proposing to abolish the immemorial and universal love of a fight are funny enough. One might as well try to abolish love between men and women. There is also a grim humor in the general indifference to wholesale killing by automobile compared with the outcry over killing in war; at least war has some purpose while a motor accident is merely futile. But after laughing or smiling at these things as we may, still the tragedy of our ineffective desire for peace needs no argument.

Why then has pacifism failed? Let us take the analogy of disease, for probably most readers will agree that our contemporary overdose of war is a social disease. Now there are two methods of treating disease, that of the Red Indian medicine man and that of the civilized physician. When an Indian went sick the medicine man tried to cure him by making loud noises. He beat a drum or shouted and danced about, and took the credit when the sick man got well, as sometimes happened. The civilized doctor acts in another fashion. He begins with diagnosis, that is with trying to find out what is the matter with the sick man. He does not always succeed but he tries. Having done his best to diagnose the disease he next treats it, basing both diagnosis and treatment on the accumulated knowledge of his profession.

Many pacifists and most woman pacifists imitate the savage medicine man rather than the civilized doctor. They are long on noise but short on rational diagnosis and treatment. A typical little incident may illustrate the point. The venerable Mrs. Carrie Catt, complaining of an unfavorable review of a certain book, wrote as follows: "If this kind of review is acceptable in our newspapers, it will invite the believers in peace and in war to

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bring their controversy into the book sections." Let us pause for a moment over so perfect a jewel of nonsense as the phrase "the believers in peace and war." Does one believe in the sun at ninety in the shade, or in the frost at twenty below zero? Are doctors wrong to "believe in" diseases, and sometimes to treat them drastically? Again, take that other gem-like expression "let us outlaw war." Obviously no war could exist unless law had previously broken down. That there are such things as laws of war is beside the point, for war is simply the use of organized force between human groups and takes place only after the ordinary process of legal adjustment has gone by the board. To talk of outlawing war is wholly unmeaning, it is simply a contradiction in terms.

To diagnose war one must begin with the unchangeable facts of human nature; we call them unchangeable because there is no evidence for believing that they have changed since the times of the earliest men. All observation of living people and all human records from the beginning of history thousands of years ago show man as man. He will no more act like an angel than a dog will act like a monkey or a cat like a cow. His outward behavior may be changed by moral teaching and by the existence of a police force; his motives will remain. Among these motives there will be a certain amount of evil; if you emptied men and women of envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness you would be destroying their humanity. Even when people are acting with just and righteous purposes there will be some quarreling among them because they will differ as to what is right and just. Aristotle says: "All men desire the good but all men differ as to what is good."

A matter closely concerning the United States is a very perfect example of these differences. If one believes in any

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theory of human equality, spiritual or political, then it sounds fair to say that all sorts of men should be allowed to live peaceably where they please in order to enjoy the good fruits of the earth. Then along come some Japanese and Chinese who say with typically oriental politeness: "Please, Honorable Mr. American people, you have plenty of room in your rich country while we die of hunger in our overcrowded lands. Allow us therefore to live among you and be subject to your laws."

To this the American people reply with some heat: "No! Not by a long shot! You so outnumber us and are used to living so much more cheaply than we that if we let you in we could not live in competition with you. We propose that our race and culture shall survive. This is our country and we will do what we like with it."

Whereat the orientals, seeing the great United States Battle Fleet, do not insist for the moment, but go away, saying merely: "Were there not some Red Indians who once possessed the country you call yours? How did you come to own it?"

After an argument like that, how are righteousness and peace to kiss each other?

If all humans shrank from strife, then of course there would be no fighting, but they do not. Indeed opposition in one form or another supplies no small part of the drama which makes life interesting. We have mentioned the immemorial and universal love of a fight; let us now take a sentence from the manuals of rhetoric: conflict is the essence of drama. Given human imperfections, criminalities, differences, and combativeness, a certain amount of organized force will always be necessary to government. Now war, as we have seen, is merely organized force between human groups. Therefore there will always be the possibility of it. Actually there will always be wars.

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Returning to our main theme, if war were always colossal in scale and appalling in savagery and destructiveness, then indeed its inevitability would be a counsel of despair. Happily, war is capable of assuming as many forms as is the sea-god Proteus. Our age suffers not from "war" in the abstract but from a peculiar form of war which has held the stage for less than a century and a half and can be ended whenever we choose to return to the same wisdom often found — although not always — among our ancestors.

Going back to the comparison with medicine, what might be an appropriate treatment for our bloody flux? A doctor would begin by studying previous outbreaks of the disease together with the methods formerly used with success against it. In other words he would study the case histories. Let us also appeal to history.

Such an appeal would show the curve of combativeness rising and falling through the centuries between two equally unattainable ideals: the negative ideal of reducing organized force to mere armed policing and the positive ideal of war so nearly unlimited as to threaten large groups with extermination. The periods in which organized force shrinks toward mere policing are those of strict limitation, those in which it swells toward extermination are those of imperfect limitation. For convenience we may call the two limited and unlimited war. Imperfectly limited war is of such scale and intensity as to strain the social order, while strictly limited war leaves the basis of that order untouched. Taking the race and culture best known to us, we find abundant records of European man, from whom the American white men today descend, throughout the last two thousand five hundred years. In the ancient world until the coming of Augustus we find four centuries of imperfectly limited

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war, beginning with the Peloponnesian War — a civil conflict within the Greek culture — and ending with a century of Roman civil wars combined with foreign conquest. Augustus however establishes the strictest limitation of war known to history, which is at last replaced by another somewhat less strict but nevertheless very real limitation, the Medieval. After lasting until about 1500, this in turn breaks down and is followed by about a century and a half of horrible religious wars. Frightened and disgusted by these, Europe took refuge in what we may call the eighteenth century limitation of war which lasted for about a hundred and fifty years and disappeared when the French Revolution introduced the universal service mass army animated by strong national and class antagonisms.

Could we find some factor common to the three phases of strict limitation, while the converse or opposite factor is common to the three phases of imperfect limitation, then the problem would be solved. Outwardly the three limitations differ enormously. In practice, the Rome of Augustus governed the entire Mediterranean area. When the factions within the Roman aristocracy had fought themselves out in more than a century of recurrent massacres, peace grew popular. Only along a single short sector between the Armenian Mountains and the Arabian Desert was the Empire confronted by another civilized power, the Parthian State which later came under Persian rule. Elsewhere Rome faced only forest or desert barbarians easily dealt with by small numbers of regularly organized and disciplined troops. Nor was internal war much to be feared, for only tiny Judea burned with strong local feeling comparable either to the old city-state patriotism or to our modern nationalism. Consequently the mass of civilized men could be completely

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divorced from arms, all military work being done by a tiny professional army of not much more than three hundred thousand, a mere constabulary.

After the break-down of the Imperial system, three factors effectively limited the scope of combat: disorganization, insolvency, and the Church. Men being what they are, the Truce of God, imposed by the Lateran, was often broken or hypocritically avoided; but in practice, its necessity was largely obviated by the other, mechanical laws of economics and confusion. Behind the stiff forms of mediaeval authority, Whirl was king, overbearing with tenebrous armies the will to war of Emperor and subject.

The Eighteenth Century limitation of war differed from both the Imperial Roman and the Medieval. That century resembled the Middle Ages in having no central government but was like Imperial Rome in that its armies were professional forces, few in numbers compared to the populations which supported them. After the horrible religious wars the men of the time, like Augustus' Romans, were tired of fighting, disgusted with blood, and afraid of the consequences of further disasters. The social destructiveness of eighteenth century wars was kept within narrow bounds by a universal spirit of reason, moderation, and good manners. Recognizing that the one rational end of war was a better peace, governments seldom attempted the total overthrow of a hostile state. Instead the usual military aim was the conquest either of a colony or of a border district to the loss of which a defeated enemy could resign himself without unbearable humiliation. The comparative liberty of action left to an enemy not completely crushed gave a certain assurance of his willingly keeping treaties which he might sign. In the actual conduct of war every effort was

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made to spare civilian life and property. The soldiers were regularly supplied and kept under strict discipline; they were rarely allowed to scatter for forage or plunder. A hard headed practical soldier like Marshal Vauban when bombarding besieged places insisted on the wisdom of sparing the civilian buildings — if you destroyed them and then took the town, you would only have to build them up again at your own expense, while if the town remained in hostile hands your barbarity would hinder the conclusion of a genuine peace. Even the lives of the soldiers themselves were economized by making generalship a game of skill rather than of unmixed force, aiming to win by manœuvres which kept the enemy from fighting except at a disadvantage, and finally aimed to defeat him without heavy loss to oneself.

What then is the common factor uniting three societies so unlike one another as Imperial Rome, Medieval Christendom, and the Eighteenth Century? The answer is moral unity. Here again as in the case of "limited versus" unlimited war we are using verbal shorthand, for between all human groups there is a minimum of such unity; no group can treat another as if that other were composed of wolves, or cattle. Therefore when we say "moral unity" we mean a high degree of unity, a willingness throughout a certain area to accept a necessary minimum of common rules and a common spirit in the conduct of life. The Roman Empire obeyed a single system of law and agreed to call the Emperor "Divine Caesar." Indeed insofar as we value peace we must all see in that exaggerated title more than an empty form. The Christian Middle Ages had a spiritual unity based upon religion, ordered here on earth by the officials of the Universal Church culminating in the Pope. Men spontaneously saw the divisions between Christians as

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less important than the unifying Faith. The Eighteenth Century was everywhere ruled by a cosmopolitan governing class uniformly possessed of classical culture and humanist philosophy.

Conversely the three periods of imperfectly limited war were all morally disunited. The unit of pre-Augustan society was the City State. In the days of their strength the pagan gods were primarily local gods; Athenians expected Athena to oppose all enemies of Athens as a matter of course. Long before Augustus all effective check upon the appetite for power had gone. In the Renaissance-Reformation period the long standing corruption of the Papacy, the inability of the Church to restrain the governing class, most of all the disputes concerning the Faith, released the popular passions which ran riot in the religious wars. With the French Revolution democracy destroyed the eighteenth century scheme, reawakened popular passions, made the total overthrow of hostile states the normal object of war, and set up the universal-service mass army as the typical military instrument. The democratic philosophy (with its insistence upon spontaneous emotion as against reason, discipline, and self-restraint) enflamed national and class passions even in countries which long resisted political democracy.

If the experience of the race has value, then to amend the tragic failure of pacifism and make our desire for peace effective, we must restore moral unity. Upon the national and class passions of our time we must define and enforce some rule which our world will accept as just. Not perfectly just of course, but on the whole just.

How might this be done? Can the unhappy League of Nations become a true superstate like Rome under the Caesars? So far it is hardly more than a parody or pallid ghost of world monarchy. Could the separated Christian

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bodies write and speak once more with moral authority? As yet they remain divided, too often trying to guide mankind by mere emotionalism divorced from clear thought. Have humanist preachers a chance of converting us to moderation and self restraint? Amid the clamor of dissent from most of the fashionable writers of our time, it would take a bold man to answer yes. Nevertheless when battle, murder and sudden death, plague, pestilence and famine shall have provoked sufficient weariness, disgust, and fear of consequences, then either we or the diminished remnant of our descendants will become reconciled.

Meanwhile, we can at least try to understand the problem. Disregarding secondary causes, such as the alleged plots of munition manufacturers, we can concentrate on the primary cause of international discord: the sense of injustice. Since from injustice springs discontent and discontent is potential war, we must examine our modern discontents. The remedy may be either sedatives or drastic surgery, or both together: but some remedy there must be. How far can equality be reconciled with social peace? To what extent were the pre-Versailles liberals justified in their approach to the matter? and in point of fact, is the democratic order contemplated by them conceivable today in any social, political, or economic structure? Can an educated man believe that Malthus was ever convincingly discredited? Of the propagandist's myths in circulation today, which are so commensurable among themselves as potentially to constitute a pattern of understanding? These are the questions that cry for answer, and until they are answered force must remain the sole arbiter of our unhappy divisions.

For his own part, the present writer sees the matter

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chiefly in terms of religion. White men, deeply rooted in the Christian tradition, seem to him unlikely either to make a god of governments or to repose in a humanism which can find no answer to the mysteries of life and death. But that is a personal view. What is certain is that any philosophy, however false, would stabilize society and limit war if only enough people believed in it.

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American Fairy-Tale

CLEMENCE DANE

THERE is a snarling, intolerant school of Anglo-American thought which asserts that an independent American literature does not yet exist. It claims that Poe, the son of English actors, is completely European in feeling and expression; that Mark Twain, co-equal of the great Victorian novelists, would have displayed precisely the same genius if he had written of an English instead of an American village; that Walt Whitman is the mere Macpherson of the States and that his poems will have as transitory an effect upon the American literature as the "Ossian" poems had upon eighteenth century European literature. It argues further that such aberrations as the substitution of "behaviorism" for "behavior," "back of" for "behind," with the use of commercial spelling and the misuse of punctuation, do not constitute a new literary form. In fact, says this snarling intolerant school, America's only real contribution to world letters is her slang.

Now I do not propose either to maintain or deny these assertions. I merely point out that the critics, whether English or American, who sincerely believe that American literature still sleeps in the womb of its English mother, who still await that imminent bright, terrific birth, are ignoring two very noteworthy facts. One is the American public's insatiable demand for tales of modern American adventure. The other is this public's growing liking for a form of short story which I can only describe as a scientific fairy-tale — using the word "scientific" in its loosest, clumsiest, and most inaccurate popular sense.

Some years ago in an article called "American Primitives" I suggested that America's "Wild West" novelettes

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were worth attention. For years stories of the Wild West, the Frozen North, and the Tropic South have multiplied in the cheap magazines. Indeed they resemble, in their incessant increase, some tropical forest, whose trees shoot up, mature, decay, and in death fertilize their own seedlings, until the jungle is choked by its own vitality, or some single tree outgrows its neighbors and becomes king of that formless wood.

Such processes occur in art as well as in nature. Just as the saga owes its life to a thousand forgotten folk tales, so, as I believe, will the literature of America owe its birth and life to the endless quantities of magazine tales which amuse the vast American public today and are forgotten tomorrow.

Just as the song of the Nibelungen or the romance of King Arthur was the final version of a thousand legends based on a long forgotten fact, so will the American epic in its final form embody the cowboy legends of America, and have for hero — who knows? — instead of Siegfried, Billy the Kid. For every nation must have its folk tales, its epic, and its poet — and America is already a nation.

And even as every nation must draw together its legends into an epic, so must every nation crystallize its dreams in a fairy-tale. Its fairy-tales will be the literary expression of its particular sense of wonder, its peculiar ideal of beauty, its special fear, its unique horror, its individual conception of delight. "Fairy" is a word degraded by the vicious slang of the day. One is half afraid to use it for fear of spoiling the beautiful conception which it has so long embodied. But by comparing these myths of — let us say — fauns, nymphs, sylphs, gnomes, sprites, brownies, nixies, pixies, peris, genies, elves, and fays one with another, it is possible to acquire a very fair idea of the peoples and countrysides which they haunt.

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The peri of "The Arabian Nights" is a majestic female, differing only from her human sister in her superior beauty and in her magic powers. She inhabits the heights of the air or dwells in subterranean caves and her enchantments are grossly material. She rewards her hero by loading his camels with bales of diamonds. Displeased she beats him into insensibility, or turns half of him into a marble statue, or the whole of him into a black dog.

The English elf, on the other hand, lurks in a cowslip bell, and has an irresponsible sense of humour. Mab and Puck embody the English love of animals, flowers, little things. An English elf can only live in the flowery, well-groomed English woodland. The Irish leprechaun, again, has more malice than wit and the banshee is a tragic creature with a private woe and a private war on her hands — as befits the dream of a people temperamentally "agin' the government," whether of fate or man. And the sturdy kobolds, the chilly ell-women, the elegant fays in turn reflect the character, the desires, the ideals, the dreams and the dreads of the race whose high places they haunt.

And indeed there is no country in the old world which they have not haunted, no land in the world which is not "fulfild of fayrie" — except the United States of America. This republic has not domesticated the wendigo and the summer-maker of the Indian, for it is a modern state, a machine-run state, a state whose wonders are material, "scientific." And since science is the absolute foe of mystery how then can there be magic in America?

Yet the most modern human craves sometimes to be illuded. He has moods in which he feels that it is his right to understand the speech of the wind and see the light that never was on land or sea. He must put the moon in his pocket sometimes, and split open an orange

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so that a princess may step out. Beasts must befriend him, birds advise him. He must wield an invisible sword, wear an invisible cap, and be shod with goloshes of fortune. This is his need: this it is in his nature to desire and no material splendors nor abstraction of the arts will do instead. He is hungry for magic and nothing else. In a word he must have his fairy-tale.

But the moderns do not believe in fairy-tales! What is to be done? The old world squares the circle by feeding itself with fairy-tales in childhood and renouncing belief in them afterwards. But Uncle Sam has only his fading Indian legends — the fairy-tales of another race. What then is he to do?

Go without? Not at all. He is not to be cheated of a good thing, and he solves the problem of supplying this lacking vitamin in his spiritual daily food in a characteristically American way. He has invented, or he is at present about the business of inventing, an entirely new system of fairy-tales that shall satisfy all his desires for the unknown, shall give him breathless illusions and incredible visions, and yet shall satisfy his machine-governed, machine-stimulated, scientific consciousness. A pumpkin which turns into a fairy coach is a piece of silliness, but he is perfectly ready to accept (within the limits of his magazine story) the superspeed ship which takes him in one turn of the handle beyond the farthest star of known space and into another dimension altogether. He will accept a robot, but not a dragon. He will travel to Jupiter, but not to the Islands of the Blessed.

I found my first American fairy-tale on a bookstall in, I think, Chicago. It was a magazine with double columns of clear print on coarse greyish paper with crude black-and-white illustrations and the usual unattractive pre-

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liminary advertisements. *Astounding Stories* was the name of it. The cover was as astounding as the title, though I have seen so many covers since that I forget if it was a picture of a pterodactyl struggling with a seven-handed robot, or whether it was merely a man and woman in divers' helmets, clinging together in the interior of a globular machine surrounded by goggle-eyed footless Martians. At any rate I became a passionate searcher-out of these amazing twenty-cent-worths. I located sister magazines, notably *Wonder Stories* and *Weird Tales*. I learnt their American dates of appearance and recently found that one of them appears irregularly on a Waterloo Station bookstall, to the confusion of the apologetic clerk. He hates me to ask for it. For three years in short these papers have been an enormous amusement to me, for crude, illiterate, slangy as most of the stories are, they do none the less represent a stirring of the ancient sense of wonder, the human love of magic, in a continent poor in legends and peopled by aliens from all over the world. These amazing magazines call themselves "science fiction." But they are nothing in the world but America's fairy-tales.

We go to the past for our fairy-tales, America to the future, that is all. The Old World knows that once there was a golden age. The New World knows that some day there will be a golden age, and all her fairy-tales concern this future.

But what amazing tales they are. *Wonder Stories* calls itself frankly "the magazine of popular fiction." It lives up to its boast. It describes flying ships and rays of unknown power; rays that will fuse a planet as easily as a burglar can fuse the lock of a safe. It describes supermen who can become invisible, can travel faster than light, who can take themselves and their entire ships' company

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on travels beyond our universe altogether, and after some sixty million years of adventures arrive back the day before they started. It describes inhabitants of worlds not yet born, and the eccentricities of world-conquerors long after the known planets have vanished. Sometimes the voyage is backwards to Atlantis. Sometimes it describes experiments only a few hundred years ahead of our own time. But whether a group of human beings travels into eternity in the space of a minute, or a scientist subdivides himself into an endless series of lesser personalities, a man from Jupiter saves "earthlings," or a Great Brain controls a civilization of lesser brains, all the stories prove one thing. They prove that the new world has the old world's gift of belief in the unbelievable. Magic has come to stay in America.

And not only magic. The ghosts are returning also. *Astounding Stories* and *Wonder Stories* deal principally with space ships, planets and adventures in time and space. They are practical in manner, however wonderful in matter, but the *Weird Tales* magazine goes in for "ghaisties and ghoulies" and is pulled up sharply by correspondence if it becomes too "scientific," as you will see by this quotation from a letter to the editor:

> Though I have read *Weird Tales* since it started I have not added my voice to the general clamor. So here goes. In the first place, keep *Weird Tales* weird. Stories of other planets are O.K. But there are too many other magazines with the same type of story. As one of my friends remarked the other day: 'Good-night! First they tow the moon around, then the earth, then the sun, then the universe, and then to cap it all they start in on galaxies.'

I join hands with the writer — his complaint is just, and my own! There *have* been too many galaxies of late in *Astounding Stories*, and I should be sorry to see the sister

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magazine corrupted. Yet I have a certain sympathy with the editor of the latter; for the correspondent finishes by declaring:

> I have just finished the June issue. Here is my idea of it.
> The best story: "They Called Him Ghost."
> Not so good: "Vampires of the Moon," the same old theme!

Yet in the same issue we find another correspondent asking:

> How about more vampire and good old-fashioned ghost stories? And less of these planetary yarns.

Who would be an editor? Who, for that matter, would be an author, when a gentleman from Rockdale, Texas, is liable to write:

> I hope you are still considering an authors' page . . . if we knew about the authors, whether their lives be crammed with excitement or normally dull, the stories would prove of much greater interest to us all.

This suggests that readers of American fairy-tales are able to share the delightful uncertainty of the Old World's small and big children as they listen to —

> A woman's story at a winter's fire
> Authorized by her grandam.

Such children know that she has not herself seen the wonders she describes; but at least they are vouched for by an elderly lady of unimpeachable honesty. There is just a chance that the elderly lady has taken part in the wonderful adventure, has met Hecate upon the blasted heath and learned that —

> Upon the corner of the moon
> There hangs a vaporous drop profound.

Perhaps she has even been shown how to —

> — catch it ere it come to ground.

The same wistful hope seems to prompt the letter-

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writer who desires "to know about authors." Is it possible that one of them does really know a scientist who has made a space ship or has travelled to Mars? The belief in magic dies hard, even in a modern state. Certainly the editors and contributors to *Weird Tales*, *Astounding Stories*, and *Wonder Stories* have resolved that it shall not die the easier through them.

Astounding Stories is the most original of the three magazines, and in one of its later numbers it surpassed itself by publishing a serial called "The Einstein Express" — "a great thought-variant story." ('Thought-variant' is a Word of Power. What it means I do not know; but you meet it in every number, arm in arm with that other Word of Power, 'hyper-space.') The hero of "The Einstein Express" is called "Arthur," Art for short. The heroine's name is Amelia. Art has to choose between love and science, and decides that, "science must win, for a while, anyhow."

> "Maybe," he muttered, and his low hard tones echoed in a sepulchral manner through the empty laboratory, "it will be for all time."

For, as he explains to his love:

> Science in this year of 1942 is of more intense importance than ever — especially since I am so tremendously fortunate as to induce Winkler, the chewing-gum magnate, to back us to the extent of half a million for our experiment. A scientist in this position cannot chose. He must go on.

He does go on. He is "disintegrated" in the interests of science,

> "then, by means of a key matrix, re-integrated into his original form independent of time."

And Amelia, repenting her jealousy of his work, decides to be disintegrated with him.

The results of the decision are serious. Especially seri-

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ous is the effect on Einstein himself. For in the words of hero number two:

> "I spent the evening yesterday with the Professor who, you know, is now confined to his room and must carefully conserve his strength. We sat up as late as he dared, and together we unrolled before our eyes some of the logical implications of the discovery — if it is such. I will confess to you, gentlemen, that I was compelled to place my hands before my eyes in horror. I am not —

finishes hero number two modestly,

> authorized to speak for Professor Einstein, but I speak for myself.

Now isn't that a lovely fairy-tale?

And we are not only given the lovely fairy-tale, but we are given illustrations. I open *Astounding Stories* for last September on a picture of a piece of travel machinery much more marvellous than Prince Camaralzamen's flying horse. It is lit by Aladdin lamps and guarded by two "terrestials"; for in these stories people of our earth are never called human beings. They are invariably "earthlings," "earthmen," or "terrestials," and they generally share their adventures with Venusians, Plutonians, Martians, or Mercurians. "Moonmen" occur seldom, and H. G. Wells's "Selenite" has not caught on, though there is little doubt that the *First Men in the Moon*, *The Time Machine*, and *The Sleeper Awakes* are the parents and originals of half these stories.

But to return to our picture! Facing the "terrestials" is a semi-transparent figurelet with a huge head and a figure hardly human, as weird as the artist's pencil could make him, and underneath is written:

> "I welcome you to Norlamin, Terrestials," spoke the projection. "I suppose that you are close friends of Seaton and Crane, and that you come to learn why they have not communicated

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> with you?" Self-contained as DuQuesne was, this statement almost took his breath away. . . .

Here, you see, is the phraseology of the schoolboy, who wants to get on with the story and doesn't care tuppence about style. The writers of these tales perfectly understand the point of view, and indeed I suspect that they adapt a style deliberately crude, slangy, and illiterate in order to accommodate themselves to their special audience. . . . I suspect this the more since a rising young dramatist, author of one of the hits of a recent season, confessed to me that he had at one time contributed to these magazines. A month or two later a distinguished editor unblushingly made similar confession.

And why should he blush? The tales are nonsense, but they are entertaining nonsense, and they do stimulate the imagination of many thousands of readers. They are not for a delicate palate, nor for a literary palate. Nevertheless they are a kind of food. There must have been many useless variants of *The Youth Who Learned to Shudder* before that weird tale was perfected, or *The Loathly Worm* or *Tamlin.* Educated people may laugh at these crude American fairy-tales; but I imagine that the educated American will laugh louder than the educated Englishman, while neither will deny that they excite the sense of wonder.

And of wonder poetry is born.

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Greek Column

KATHERINE GARRISON CHAPIN

Suddenly, out of the tortuous expression of ages,
Past, present mingling, now superimposed or broken up
from below,
To come once upon perfection, to stand breath-taken
before one simple
Strong clear thought, one intention, one form in space, is
to know

Happiness; that is not the loud shout of huzzahs, the eye's
cup brimming over,
With deep feeling held too long, released at last in the
heart's cry,
That surges upward to a peak, a pitch, a flame's point
and breaks unended, —
The Gothic spire, the sweep of violins, the starred rocket
against the sky.

To stand before this warm white stone, strong poised,
serene, completed,
Mellowed and rounded to the touch, along the smooth
unwavering ascent,
Each long line upward in a purposed ending, a rich
flowering
Of living leafage, curled over and eternal — this is hap-
piness. A content

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That stirs deeply and returns to its own place of satisfaction,
Rests in definite limits, is firm as the rounded pedestal of stone.
Roar over, you waves of time and eruption, change of mood and impulse and ambition
Toward beauty. This shining marble column in a dark archway stands alone.

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H' Y, Commissioner!

CHARLES J. McGUIRK

MR. AVERAGE U. S. CITIZEN is the smartest individual evolved in the last hundred centuries. He won't tell you so because he will take it for granted that you know it already, but he will prove it to you in the first ten minutes of conversation.

He will join you in a hearty laugh at all the stupid oafs in Europe who are suckers enough to allow themselves to be ruled by dictators like Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler. He knows all about Europeans and the different nationalities and races that go to make up that troubled continent. He knows that the lower English classes dote on feeling the heels of their betters in the backs of their necks. He has worked it out that corrupt French politics and politicians and the national sentimentalism over beautiful murderesses with lovely legs are three disgraces to civilization. And he will pity you if you can't see how ridiculous it is for millions of Russians, Italians and Germans to kneel to a professional trouble maker, a reporter and a house-painter respectively.

Maybe he is a little intolerant about the rest of the world but you can't blame him much. Here he is, the flower of ten thousand years of governmental evolution, the first really Free Citizen in history.

Of course, he is subject to certain compelling influences, though most of the time, he doesn't suspect them. His wife pushes him here and there or leads him around by the nose, making up his mind for him in that tactful manner which has been Woman's through the centuries. The knowledge that he hates to make up his own mind has been one of the secrets of her power over him, though

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it is a secret no longer. Lots of people know it, especially politicians and "political authorities." These reach him over the radio or through his favorite newspaper. They know he knows where to look for the smart people whose opinions coincide with his.

If he is broke and out of a job, one of the dispossessed, he spends part of a Sunday afternoon listening to Father Charles Coughlin or, if he has any time to spare from the sports section, he seeks out further information about Dr. Townsend's Plan. He likes that Plan because he can see why anybody who has been able to last through the last fifty or sixty years deserves to be kept in ease and comfort the rest of his life on a kind of bonus.

If through inheritance, shrewdness, will power, or pure unadulterated bull luck, he has been able to have a little money, or his business, left, he reads Walter Lippmann or Mark Sullivan and "views with alarm" right along with them. He has no use for "Reds" or radicals of any sort. He longs for the good old horse-and-buggy days of the "rugged individualist," though he would miss the speed of the automobile and would squawk to high heaven if one of those "rugged individualists" succeeded in cutting his profits by forming a trust.

No matter what he believes, he believes according to his background and his economic position. Physically and mentally, he stands somewhere between Casper Milquetoast and Popeye, the Sailor. He is mild-mannered, pleasant to meet, though a trifle opinionated, and a joiner of every fraternal and social organization whose dues he can afford.

He stands without hitching and he does what he is told, if the telling is done tactfully. But, fed the right kind of spinach, he could become the terror of the world. Now, it is to the advantage of all those who exploit him to

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see that he is not fed the right kind of spinach because of the danger of economic indigestion. There are millions of men and women, therefore, who have devoted their lives to keeping it from him.

This snapshot of Mr. Average Citizen is lightly sketched in here so that you may see the fallow ground in which is planted and replanted, year after year, the most potent spinach grown and canned in the United States, Political Spinach. It is all the same vegetable, or drug, no matter which political party dishes it out. It is grown strictly for voter consumption and when it has reached its full stature and strength, it is scooped into cans labelled, "Republican," "Democrat," "Progressive," "Farm Laborite," "Socialist," "Communist," or what have you.

From these cans it is strained into the newspapers, rostrums, broadcasting stations, pulpits and other mediums for the distribution of public information — or misinformation. And Mr. Average Citizen wallows in it. For three or four months before an election, he can't escape it. It blares at him from the radio. It slaps him between the eyes from his newspaper or the news reels. And it smites his ears in the saloon, the country club, the churches, or the 5:15.

About a month before election, the disseminators really turn the heat on, and the millions of the first Free Citizens to be evolved in ten thousand years fight with their neighbors, or beat their wives because they don't see eye-to-eye with them politically. But, no matter how bitter the fight has been, the morning after Election Day finds Mr. Average Citizen waking up, either with a sense of smug satisfaction or a terrific hang-over, depending upon whether his candidates have won or lost. And immediately after that, he forgets politics altogether, leaving them in the hands and heads of the Perennial Candidate,

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successful or otherwise, that strange, and often pathetic phenomenon of our great Democracy, the Seeker After Office.

These men, and sometimes women, are the lotus, or to keep our simile, the spinach eaters of the modern age. Drifting into politics in a small, amateurish way, usually in their early youth, they wake up one morning to find themselves as addicted to public office as the drunkard is to the Demon Drink or the drug fiend is to his opium, his cocaine or his hashish.

There is the impression abroad among many people "in the know" that the run-of-the-mine politician is venal, a push-over for the temptation to graft. But this, my dear fellow Average Citizens, is a libel, a pretty base canard. You must throw this idea from your mind if you want to understand him.

The Office Seeker or Office Holder is a queer bundle of opportunism and party loyalties. He has learned that the Business of Government of this, the Greatest Democracy the world has ever known, is administered, not by "The Peepul," but by a small group of men who have gained control of the major political parties. These men are what the last couple of generations knew as "The Bosses." They are not called "Bosses" today because Theodore Roosevelt, Lincoln Steffens, and other radicals of another day put a stigma on the title. Yet, they remain bosses and, while the majority of them are honest, they are no more averse to taking a short cut through an ethical question than are lawyers or business men.

Strangely, they are unselfish. But they owe their best efforts to "the organization" and if the interests of "The Peepul" conflict with those of "the organization," then it is just too bad for "The Peepul."

The bosses — and by any other name you want to call

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them, they would smell as sweet — pick the candidates for every office from dog-catcher in Squeedunk to the President of the United States. And you may be sure they are not picking anyone who has tendencies to kick over the traces and do things that might hurt the organization. There is nothing a political boss hates more than a recalcitrant office holder. Presidents like Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt are anathemas to the pilots who demand the real job of steering the ship of state. They are anathemas because they won't take orders. They won't stand hitched. They won't do as they are told.

There are the Bosses, the source of supply, or rather the judges of the crop, of office holders. And there are The People who demand the office holders. Between them appears the Office Seeker, the Candidate. He is a pretty fine citizen. He has a "front" which makes an acquaintance trust him on sight or beyond it. And he is trustworthy. Only, burning deep within him is the craving for the prominence which public office would bring him. He would sacrifice anything to get it. He has, as a matter of historical record. Two presidents of the United States paid with their hearts' blood for the exalted position. One spent his declining years writing a voluminous history of a war to make good the obligations he believed he owed through the skullduggery of grafting friends. Another died, buried beneath the avalanche of scandal which crashed down upon his administration through the activities of a ring of super-criminals who used his confidence and his friendship for their own crooked ends. And two mayors of a great city have been forced into an exile abroad so that they would not be compelled to give evidence which would incriminate friends whose tin boxes shrieked as they were being dragged from safety

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vaults even while the mayors' steamships pulled out of the harbor. None of these men was dishonest. All were the victims of their position and the people they trusted. They paid through the nose for their honors.

This is the open season for perennial candidates. At election time they emerge from their business and professional offices. They come out of the wood and up through the drains to offer their bodies and their souls to their communities. The myriads of "favorite sons" who passionately state their willingness to be pressed into the service of their country as candidates for the Presidency of the United States never lose their fascination despite the fact that they appear every four years as regular as clockwork. These men are out after only one thing, the honor and dignity of public office.

Perennial candidates all think the same way, regardless of the office they seek. The presidency is no more sweet to the President of the United States than the office of Commissioner is to the man holding that office in a third-class city. The majority of politicians are betrayed into politics by their sense of public duty. By the time they learn they are unwanted and decide to quit, they find they can't. They are the victims of the habit.

There are three men in Our Town who have held public office and suffered for it. Theirs is the story of the trials and tribulations that beset and, sometimes, wreck a public official. Their composite picture tells the whole tale.

Our Town has a population of forty thousand souls. It has the commission form of government, five commissioners, elected every four years, attending to every detail. The elections are non-partisan. The man who receives the largest vote automatically becomes mayor during the life of that particular commission.

Up until March 1933, Daniel Nevins, one of our most

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popular and respected citizens, had no more idea of ever entering politics than Hitler has of becoming President of the French Republic. He was merely a public spirited individual, a descendant of one of the city's Founders who carried on the traditions laid down by that first ancestor around 1690. He was a master builder, a bank and building and loan director, and a vestryman in historic Old First Church. He was sixty-three years old then and the pattern of his life was almost completed. You would have been forgiven for thinking that it never could be changed.

But David Bell, Commissioner of Public Safety, died, and Ed Moreland the Mayor, immediately sent for Dan and demanded that he take the dead man's place. At first, Dan laughed at him. He knew nothing of politics and what he knew about politicians hadn't impressed him at all. But Moreland impressed upon him that this wasn't a request. It was a demand. He was being pressed into service to help the town out of an emergency.

The town was confronting two problems which threatened to become tragedies. One was an inability to collect taxes. The other was the inevitable consequence of that, the inability to pay the interest on its bonds, part of which must soon be retired, according to contract. That meant a loss of credit to the town and, thence, payless paydays.

It would have been a very simple problem to solve had the town been a private business. All that needed to be done was to collect a quarter of the taxes long overdue and cut the budget by slicing all municipal salaries ten per cent.

Ed Moreland explained all this to Dan and when Dan asked him why the Commission didn't do it, then, Moreland admitted that the whole Commission wanted to be returned to office in the election fourteen months hence.

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At Dan's next natural question, Ed went into detail. "If we put the pressure on collecting back taxes, the property owners will never forgive us. We'll make five enemies for every city job we abolish. If we take the fat city supply contracts away from local tradesmen, we'll be guilty of political bad faith because they gave us the support in the last election on the tacit understanding that they would get these contracts. And, if we cut city salaries, we'll antagonize not only every policeman, fireman, school teacher and other public service, but all their friends and relatives. Next election day they'll tear us limb from limb."

Dan refused to believe such a thing about his fellow townsmen. He believed they would come to the polls remembering the Commission had cut the budget and thus saved every individual money. He believed they would re-elect this Commission as a reward of virtue.

But Ed Moreland laughed, cynically, and told him he didn't know his fellow townsmen. He admitted there wasn't a man on the Commission with courage enough to face the emergency because they were all, including himself, politicians. Dan got mad and took on the job.

The next day, the Commission appointed Dan Nevins to David Bell's place as Commissioner for Public Safety. After his induction, they welcomed him among them.

"Commissioner," they smiled, "we're glad to have you with us."

It was the first time Dan had the title conferred upon him. Its pleasant sound should have warned him.

ED MORELAND, he found, had not exaggerated conditions. The town had little ready cash and a bond payment almost due. It had a high percentage of unpaid taxes and an enormous outpour of moneys, chiefly in

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salaries. But a private firm would have had no hesitancy in lopping off a lot of these latter and he was sure a series of strong letters would bring some of the overdue taxes into the treasury.

He waited two weeks, studying the other Commissioners, trying to find out why they hadn't done these obvious things. He learned that no Commissioner ever looked directly at any problem but studied it through the prism of the coming election day. He weighed every decision, not by its possible effect on the welfare of the town but by how it might influence his own political future. He measured every public act by future votes. None of them would go on record as supporting any move which would bring the anger of the voters down upon them. Dan decided to coerce them.

Just before his third Commission meeting, he called the newspaper men into his office. He explained that he had been appointed to the Commission for the sole purpose of shaving the budget to the core. The other Commissioners wouldn't do it because they wanted to run for office again. He didn't. So he was taking the first step. At this meeting, he was going to demand that all town salaries be cut ten per cent. This would include that of the Commissioners. But he was going to give every town employee the chance to prove his devotion to the town by voluntarily accepting the cut instead of being forced to take it. Then he produced the batch of letters he had written to the heads of every town department.

If you remember, 1933 was just a little bit above the nadir of the depression and this was a good newspaper story. Would the town's school teachers, policemen, firemen, clerks, and street cleaners voluntarily accept the cut to save it from bankruptcy or would they fight it? Press associations wired it. It ran all over the country.

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At the next meeting, he rose diffidently and suggested that all salaries be cut ten per cent. The four other members of the Commission almost leaped down his throat refusing to vote on such a drastic measure. But Dan produced letters from the heads of all city departments. City employees had unanimously agreed to accept the cut. There was no argument about it. The crestfallen Commission sheepishly passed it. Our Town made the headlines again next day.

But in that same meeting, Dan arose again. He said he had been studying tax lists and noting the delinquent property owners. Some of these, he knew, couldn't pay their back taxes. But there were a lot of delinquents who wouldn't pay because they were slackers. They were letting their payments slide either because they hoped to pass unnoticed in this depression or because they had granted some political favor to the men serving on the Commission. These slackers were going to force a tax sale in which many honest citizens would lose their property. He had made a list of these. He proposed to read it if they had not paid their taxes by the next Commission meeting. Then he would move for a tax sale. And every honest person who lost his property would know exactly whom to blame.

He sat down amid a silence you could cut. Ed Moreland was pale and his eyes were bulging. The other three Commissioners looked just like him. A murmur rose and swelled and someone laughed. Ed Moreland adjourned the meeting and strode into the mayor's office followed by the other three Commissioners. When Dan made for there too, the reporters surrounded him, demanding to know whether he really meant to print the list of slackers. Dan laughed and walked through them.

He walked into the mayor's office and another preg-

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nant silence. Ed Moreland told him sadly that he had betrayed them all and made them look like a lot of cheap politicians. The others chimed in, warning him that printing any man's name with the inference that he was a slacker was libelous. They abused him vehemently for half an hour. He sat there, smiling quietly, letting the storm subside. He didn't tell them that he had never even glanced at a tax list and had no intention of publishing anybody's name.

And he never had to. By next Commission meeting, more than a third of the back taxes had been paid. As one reporter put it, the slackers got stuck in the tax office doorways, hurrying to pay up so they wouldn't be regarded as public enemies. Our Town could make payment on her bonds and have a little money over for the first time in four years.

FOR A YEAR Dan Nevins worked day and night to reduce the budget. His methods were always the same. He would suggest a cut in any of the various expenditures of the town. When the other Commissioners objected, he took it directly to the people through the press, or threatened to, which, toward the end of that Commission's term, had exactly the same effect.

In his own departments, Police and Fire, he cut his budget $48,782.62 by eliminating some soft political jobs and cutting purchases for schools, hospitals and other public institutions sixty per cent. As a result, the 1934 budget was reduced to $1,552,000 against $2,036,000 in 1933 and the tax rate was cut from $4.16 in 1933 to $3.22, a saving of nearly $500,000 in money and a tax slash of 94 points or almost 25 per cent.

He had won. He had saved the town from bankruptcy. But as his task neared its successful completion, he found

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himself wanting to keep right on with it. He wanted to stay in office. He had become a politician. What made him that way was the simple phrase,

"H'y, Commissioner!"

When he heard it the first time, it had a pleasant sound. But in that year, its constant reiteration came to connote for him recognition, success, power. It meant forty policemen and thirty-five firemen whose boss he was, for whom his word was law. It was in the headlines of the newspaper stories recording his ruthless, dramatic fight to bring his town back to a self-supporting basis.

It was the half bantering, half respectful salute of fellow citizens whose civic interests he was administering. And it greeted him everywhere, in his office, in the vestry of his church, at formal dinners, at the club, at the movies, in the streets. It acknowledged him as one of the elders of the people. It was success in a field into which he had newly strayed after a lifetime of prosaic business.

"H'y, Commissioner!"

It was something he wanted. And how he wanted it!

He accepted the endorsement of the Non-Partisan League and headed its ticket of five candidates. The Non-Partisan League was composed of Our Town's best people, best in every sense of the word, in intelligence, civic mindedness, and wealth. If the rules of business had applied to politics, the League's endorsement would have been tantamount to election.

There were nineteen candidates in the field, most of whom could not poll five hundred votes apiece. Surprisingly, Ed Moreland abruptly announced he would not run. His family and business needed him. But that wasn't the explanation he gave to Dan Nevins.

"I couldn't be elected dog-catcher in this town, Dan." He cheerfully confessed. "And neither can you. The

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town will never forgive you for pulling her out of a bad hole. You see, Dan, it's all right to help the people — if you're a philanthropist, but not if you're a politician. All communities are ungrateful. Every politician knows that. So he helps himself and any other politician he has to help. You and I kept our promises to the people. Now they have the chance to reward us. But I'm not putting my head out for the reward because I don't want to be scalped. I'm going into seclusion. I got you into this and I'd like to get you out of it but I know I can't. If you'd take my advice, you wouldn't run this time because they'll tear your heart out."

Dan vigorously and angrily denied this. He told Ed he was underestimating the decency of his fellow townsmen. He had saved the town from bankruptcy. The town would show her gratitude. But it didn't work out that way. There was no real issue, no taint of political scandal in the campaign because Our Town is clean. But there was a whispered campaign of villification directed chiefly against Dan Nevins. It was so bitter and it hurt so much that Dan realized the truth of Ed Moreland's prophecy. It was literally tearing his heart out.

He sat in the Mayor's office with the other "Ins" and their wives and friends and watched as the last tally of the sad news dribbled in at 4 A. M. of the day after election day. He had run fourteenth. He had been snowed under. He had been beaten by people he had never heard of before.

The hell with them! He thought bitterly that night. American communities did not want their affairs run by capable men. They wanted them in the hands of ballyhoo artists. They wanted to be governed by the cynical leaders of the mob. They deserved everything they got, scandals, criminal tie-ups, graft. Well, he was through!

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The telephone rang and it was Ed Moreland.

"H'y, Commissioner!" He boomed. "Feeling low? Well, don't let it get you down. Remember, there's always another election just around the corner. There's the makings of a good politician in you, Dan."

"H'y, Commissioner!"

Recognition! Power! Success!

And he could not have the title any more. He had been beaten out of it in yesterday's election. The people of his town, the town his ancestors had helped to found, had taken away his badge!

"Listen, Ed," he said. "I want you to use your influence with Jim Whithe (the County Boss). I want you to introduce me to him. Ed, I've decided to run for Congress in 1936."

Well, he's running for Congress today. You can find him at any hour of the day or night on Main street, button-holing uninterested citizens to explain earnestly that the Town has to elect him. A lifetime teetotaler, he seeks audiences in taverns, addressing his hearers in the smooth unctuous manner of the politician hunting for votes. He is handsome in his old tall, slim, white-haired way but something is gone from him. It is his dignity. He is a man of probity, ruined by politics and that deceitful phrase, "H'y, Commissioner!"

Serving today on that same Commission is Edward T. Maroon. He is the veteran of the body, having been returned to office in the three elections of the last twelve years.

Commissioner Maroon, up to six months ago, was a beer salesman, the best representing the largest brewery in the state. It was in the dead of winter that the State Alcoholic Administrator in an idle moment glanced through a list of occupations followed by the Commis-

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sioners of towns throughout the state. He was shocked and horrified to discover that sixty-seven of these Civic Administrators were peddling malt and distilled liquors. Immediately, he issued a ukase that such public officials would make up their minds forthwith. They could either peddle drinks or govern their towns but they couldn't do both at one and the same time. While he didn't suspect anybody of anything as vulgar as coercion, nevertheless practices similar to this one had been factors in bringing down upon the country the blight of Prohibition.

Commissioner Maroon mulled over the matter for a month. He even hired a lawyer. But the Alcoholic Administrator had right on his side. Studying the problem in a detached manner, it did look bad. Well, it was one or the other. Which would it be?

His income as a beer salesman brought him in about $3,200 a year. His salary as a Commissioner was $1,500. But his son was grown and through college and he and his wife had a little put by. He resigned from the brewery. He couldn't bear the thought of not being entitled to hear that greeting, "H'y, Commissioner!"

And then there was Commissioner George Esteem. He was one of those who went down to defeat with Dan Nevins. Next to Commissioner Maroon, he was the oldest member of the governing body. His defeat was his own fault. He was so sure of his victory that he celebrated it a week before it happened. He was still celebrating it on election day and his cohorts and followers couldn't find him. He lost out by seventeen votes.

The defeat was so unexpected and uncalled for that it put him to bed for a week. When he arose, he was cleansed of foolishness and alcohol. He went on the wagon and has not tippled since. Instead, he bent his energies to selling oil and is making more money than he ever made before.

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But he is already laying his plans to run again in the election of 1936. It is even possible that he will resume drinking by that time. He says nobody has greeted him with, "H'y, Commissioner!" for a year now and he misses it dreadfully.

So, there's the psychology of your office seeker, your Perennial Candidate. It doesn't make any difference what the office is, they like the power and the title which goes with it. They like people to yell at them, "H'y, Commissioner!" or its equivalent.

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What is Contemporary Poetry?

JOHN ERSKINE

A SHROPSHIRE LAD appeared forty years ago. Having spent most of those decades in a conscious and systematic study of poetry, I am glad I met the little book first in the fresh ignorance of boyhood. I missed in it then the profound echoes of the centuries, the magnificent appropriations from Greece and Rome and the Middle Ages, and I fortunately did not know that A. E. Housman was a classical scholar, with a name in the universities of the world for meticulous and combative erudition. Unembarrassed by any preparation in me, the poems were free to make, as on new readers they still do, the poignant effect of immediate life. This Housman, whoever he might be, wrote about Shropshire, which I located on the Welsh border, and he must have lived there, and broken his heart over his girl and his friend, and he had got drunk, and had committed at least one murder, with consequent danger of hanging and a morbid interest in executions, and he had witnessed a suicide and served as pall-bearer at an athlete's funeral, and in his lighter moments he admired flowers and cherry trees and landscape in general, and was sorry boys die young or enlist in the army.

It had all happened to him, obviously. This haunting and essentially cheerful music was wrung from a tortured soul. I could see why, in the concluding poem, he offered the opinion that life is trying, and only a strong man can stand it. The odd thing was that though the flow of my own life had hitherto been smooth, I felt as if every one of these sorrows had happened to me.

When the "Last Poems" were published in 1922, I

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sought their pages with conflicting zest and reluctance, having small faith that the early beauty could be repeated or extended, or that the illusion of personal experience would still convince, now that I had read much, and knew how much more Housman had read, and how respectable had been his conduct. But the magic was there undiminished. The same themes, the same regret for careless youth, the same harping on capital punishment, the same stoical advice to endure rather than hope to understand. I could trace these themes, if I chose, to Horace and Lucretius and other Romans, or to the Greek historians and philosophers, or to François Villon and later Frenchmen, and I could see a resemblance between the racy power of Housman's diction and the fiery, muscular speech of Catullus. But the poems in this second volume, as in the first, gave the impression of being anything but derivative. Their elements were completely fused in one very original personality, and the verse seemed spontaneous song.

In the *Cornhill Magazine* for April, 1901, Housman permitted to be published the "Fragment of a Greek Tragedy," one of the most brilliant parodies ever perpetrated. He considered it a negligible trifle, according to report, but once known to a few friends it could not be hidden, and it seems now an important clue to his methods and to at least the bookish sources of his inspiration.

He left us also the superb essay on "The Name and the Nature of Poetry" delivered as the Leslie Stephen Lecture, May 9, 1933, at the University of Cambridge, where he was Kennedy Professor of Latin. His first impulse, as he tells us, was to speak on the Artifice of Versification, a subject on which few poets, even the successful ones, had in his opinion any precise instruction.

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A footnote of remarkable richness indicates the treatment he would have applied to this theme. But on further thought he concluded that such matters were unsuited to public discussion, and chose instead to define pure poetry, with illustrations, to remind us, in chief, that "poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it," and to tell us, in a whimsical and tantalising passage, the conditions in which inspiration had come to him. It was as though he were burlesquing Wordsworth. "I have seldom written poetry unless I was rather out of health, and the experience, though pleasurable, was generally agitating and exhausting. If only that you may know what to avoid, I will give some account of the process."

We are to have shortly another volume, "More Poems," presumably a collection of gleanings. The four books and the parody are all the foundation we at present know of for a reputation in poetry which promises to rise steadily.

There is something magnificent in this fame, though it is so slenderly supported. Indeed, Housman's admirers already find it not disloyal to ask whether his place in literature, or the place he seems likely to occupy, can be explained by any of his poems, separately considered. Other poets of economical output, like Edgar Allan Poe, have at least produced single masterpieces. For purposes of immortality "The Raven," for example, is quite enough. Which poem of Housman's stands out? If you can name no one of them, then what is it in each of his charming lyrics which adds up to such a reverberating total?

I think Housman knew what it was, and studied to put it there. By genius no doubt, but also by forethought and self-criticism, he gives the illusion of being contemporary. After forty years his work remains not timeless but as true to the time as a mirror. To understand his art

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we should ask what is it that makes any poetry seem contemporary, even when it is first written — and what makes it continue to seem so; for the continued ability to speak to the condition, and with the accent, of succeeding moments, is what literary folk call immortality.

Every true poet, one may suppose, wishes to address his own people in his own day. He may also crave a hearing with those shadowy strangers, posterity, but this ambition is suspect, since it is liveliest among youthful versifiers, in whom the afflatus is as yet only a prickly stir, like a gathering sneeze, or among the elder and incompetent who having once spoken to deaf ears find consolation in a theory of postponed justice. The authentic talent is determined to have its say now and here. By instinct also, and with the aid of certain long-known rules, it tries to avoid a message or an accent which will date.

The secret lies partly in the choice of language, partly in the choice of theme. Though Housman is illuminating when he discusses language, he does not tell us where he found his themes. Surely not in his own experience, literally reported. To track him down we must use our wits, but since we know what his professional studies were, the hunt will not be difficult.

As to language, he follows the traditional rules of the classics. The art of poetry, he says in effect, is the art of calling things by their right names. Adam facing the animals was the first poet. Notice that Houseman lectured on the Name as well as the Nature of poetry, beginning from the outside and working inward. In poetry as in life, that is the right order. In the beginning was the word.

The poet gives most of his attention, perhaps, to avoiding the wrong word which contemporary speech may offer him, or to avoiding the wrong use or the over-use

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of a good word. In the presence of an utterly new fact or experience, he must like Adam invent a new name. Housman illustrates from the less happy versifying of the eighteenth century, and from the linguistic achievements of modern science. I am tempted to quote liberally from one brilliant passage which conveys much of the wise humor we admire in the poems:

> Salt is a crystalline substance recognized by its taste. . . . It is not the private property of a science less than three hundred years old, which being in want of a term to embody a new conception, "an acid having the whole or part of its hydrogen replaced by a metal," has lazily helped itself to the old and unsuitable word salt, instead of excogitating a new and therefore to that extent an apt one. The right model for imitation is that chemist who, when he encountered, or thought he had encountered, a hitherto nameless form of matter, did not purloin for it the name of something else, but invented out of his own head a name which should be proper to it, and enriched the vocabulary of modern man with the useful word *gas*.

The choice of the proper word in poetry is not a superficial exercise. You cannot proceed far in it without extraordinary feeling for the overtones in the common speech of man around you. You must have listened to the human heart, discovering that vital organ under whatever disguise the humdrum business of life imposes.

Moreover, the position of the word often transforms it. Much has been said wisely enough in praise of simple diction, but too often, especially in our prosaic day, the writer is satisfied with plain words taken by themselves, forgetting that language is formed of cadences, sentence-music, phrase-moldings, in comparison with which the single word is only a passing note. To speak to your contemporaries, you must master their way of shaping the curve of sounds when they are moved to love or anger or grief or dignity.

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In this technique Housman was, it seems to me, a virtuoso. His ability to produce sincere effects by the manipulation of words and cadences is so highly developed that he can, when he chooses, project the same theme in a variety of moods or tones. The poems which stab us with the illusion of personal self-revelation turn out to be achievements in objectivity. Not exclusively that, but that among other things.

Sometimes I wonder whether he was poking fun at the theory of Benedetto Croce's which fascinated us thirty years ago. Croce thought that the poet's inspiration dictated the form, that whatever you had to say must be expressed, you being you, in one inevitable cast of language and meter. Whatever helpful truth the doctrine may convey, Housman certainly demonstrates his skill in saying the same thing several ways, each seeming inevitable.

Do you recall the poem numbered twenty-five in the "Shropshire Lad"? It tells of two boys in love with one girl, two friends only one of whom can have his heart's wish. But the happy lover dies, and the girl gives herself to the boy who is still alive. Housman puts the cynical little story in the mouth of the second lover, who savors his luck but isn't proud of it.

> The better man she walks with still,
> Though now 'tis not with Fred:
> A lad that lives and has his will
> Is worth a dozen dead.

If we had only this treatment of the theme, we might say that here is the convincing, inevitable form of which Croce spoke. But in the next poem, the twenty sixth, Housman takes hold of the subject by another handle, and secures, as I think, a more tragic effect. The lover, walking out with his girl, recalls that a year ago he

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walked with a different girl, who is now in her grave; the circumstance suggests that in another year he may be dead and his new sweetheart may have comforted herself.

> When I shall sleep with clover clad,
> And she beside another lad.

But if we think the ultimate irony has here been extracted from the theme, we have only to read on into the poem numbered twenty-seven, in which the speaker is the dead lover, calling to his faithless friend. This version is so much more powerful than the others that we wonder why we were impressed by the first — that is, until we go back and read the first again. They are all three perfect, with the illusion of inevitability, but the drama is most stark in the third:

> 'Is my girl happy,
> That I thought hard to leave,
> And has she tired of weeping
> As she lies down at eve?'
>
> Ay, she lies down lightly,
> She lies not down to weep:
> Your girl is well contented.
> Be still, my lad, and sleep.
>
> 'Is my friend hearty,
> Now I am thin and pine,
> And has he found to sleep in
> A better bed than mine?'
>
> Yes, lad, I lie easy,
> I lie as lads would choose;
> I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,
> Never ask me whose.

These three poems illustrate as well as any Housman's mastery of the contemporary note, his way of persuading you that you hear a living voice. In the selection of

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language as well as of subject all writers are influenced by previous example, but for speech at least the model need not be bookish. A Matthew Arnold will advise you to carry on the grand style, with famous quotations in mind as samples. Housman, I fancy, would tell us rather to listen to our own speech in those moments when we are earnestly addressing our fellows face to face. If you can write as you talk, you can be contemporary. It seems that in the quotation from the academic lecture delivered and in the excerpts from the poems I hear the same man.

The themes which Housman treats are few, but they are imbedded in all experience, unanswerable and therefore permanent questions — the beauty and the cruelty of nature, the shortness of life, the passing of loves which swore to endure, the nearness of death, the injustice of the world, with desperate and witty counsel not to care too much.

> Malt does more than Milton can
> To justify God's ways to man.

All of these themes Housman found, I think, less by direct observation than by reading the minor poets of the Roman empire and certain medieval writers. Here is the sentiment of Catullus, and his despair; here is the stoic armor of Horace, transposed into idiomatic British; here is the weary sophistication of Tibullus; here, in the reiterated emphasis on death, especially on death by hanging, is our old friend François Villon. Some of the poems are frank translations, as in the echo of de Banville,

> We'll to the woods no more,
> The laurels all are cut.

Can a poet be contemporary who avails himself of old themes? The answer, I think, is that no other poet can be contemporary. The language must be of our own day, but the themes must belong to all our hearers, and since

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the race is not young, whatever is common experience is already very old. Leave out the themes which date, and you'll discover that all contemporary subjects are ancient and few. To recognize this fact is not to accuse literature of thinness but to pay homage to the depth of three or four unsatisfied hungers, the desire for beauty, the desire for loyalty, the desire for justice, the yearning to pursue these ideals with self-respect and dignity.

When I say that Housman learned these themes from old poets, I do not mean that having so learned them, he failed to recognize them in life. The old poets taught him, as he in turn teaches us, to see what is under our eyes. Nor do I mean that in order to grasp Housman's full meaning, we must first read the classics. The old themes interpret themselves in us. To understand the grand style of which Arnold was fond, you might need to know Homer; even more, you might need to hear Homer translated in the stiff bare English of the schoolroom. But though reading may provide you with extra pleasures, Housman's themes ask for no footnotes.

If I supply one now, it is to illustrate my point that the poems in themselves are contemporary. I have in mind the superb "Oracles," of the second volume. The oracle on Dodona is mute — and you needn't ask where or what was Dodona. The priestess with her cryptic answers is dead. But your heart answers your question, and when you ask your heart what your future will be, your heart says you must die. A good sensible answer, say you, trying to be brave; a good answer and an old one. Then for your comfort the poet adds this:

The King with half the East at heel is marched from lands of morning,
Their fighters drink the rivers up, their shafts benight the air.
And he that stands will die for nought, and home there's no returning.
The Spartans on the sea-wet rock sat down and combed their hair.

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No reader fails to respond to the image of courage; we do very well with the poem even though we haven't read Herodotus, and therefore may not know that these were the Spartans who died with Leonidas at Thermopylae, and we may not have learned that the Spartans wore their hair long when they went to battle, and combed it carefully when they expected to be killed.

Xerxes had two and a half million fighting men; the Spartans dared to block the pass with three hundred. Not believing they could be so reckless, Xerxes sent to inquire what they were doing, and the spy reported that some of them were engaged in gymnastic exercises and others were combing their long hair. The occupation seemed effeminate, but a man in the army of Xerxes who knew the Spartan customs explained that the hair-combing was the usual prelude of battle to the utmost, with neither retreat nor surrender.

The acceptance of Housman by the readers of our time compels a reconsideration of much that has been said in favor of so-called modern art. He is in the tradition, but he seems contemporary. Perhaps any true poet will be in the tradition. If there is place for experiment in art, where should the experiment be made? In the language? In the subject matter? To invent an altogether new speech, or to use a bookish speech, cuts you off from your time, and in that case it's a shaky boast to assert that posterity will appreciate you. To avoid the themes which occupy our common fears and hopes is to throw away all chance of securing an audience.

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Book Reviews

This department is devoted, in the main, to reviews of books by American authors, or books dealing with some aspect of American life.

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE. By H. L. Mencken. Knopf, $5.00.

EXUBERANCE has given way to scholarship in this fourth edition of H. L. Mencken's "standard" treatise on the American language. In the preface, marked by a note of self-effacing humility, Mencken himself tells us what has taken place. The whole book has been rewritten, from a changed viewpoint. The ebullient self-assurance of the editions up to the third, that characteristic which seemed to come from the very nature of the language itself, is gone. Mencken speaks of himself in the preface as a "lay brother" beside the distinguished philologists with whom he has had to do in this latest and probably last edition of his famous work. To them he gives due credit for much of the encouragement and solid backing which have enabled him to restudy the problems he has had to face anew in such a difficult undertaking.

Our language had no credit with the world until Mencken's time. It was believed, except by a few of the most astute among us, that we still spoke English — though the evidence against such a presumption was historic and overwhelming.

But I do not want to allow myself to be over-impressed by the seriousness of this new sally in defense of our native tongue. It is the subject of the study, the language itself, which surpasses all scholarship, that needs special stressing. And in this I am wondering if the previous edition, the third, had not an advantage over the present one.

Rather than make the book unnecessarily cumbersome certain crudities contained in the earlier editions have been omitted, the text being limited to those parts of the subject of which Mr. Mencken has any knowledge. Too bad it had to be so. The often unsupported surmises, the ill-assorted jumble of some of the matter in the earlier editions sometimes had an instinctive justness about them which added zest to the whole. I miss them. They left a jagged edge, but so does the American language. For those who may share this feeling I should strongly advise that the third edition be not completely put

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aside in favor of the present work. For suppose it be true, which I doubt, that by the very weight of numbers, one hundred and twenty-five million people moving more or less as a unit, we drag the English language as spoken in England after us, What of it, anyway? The chief importance to us is American.

What a book! I still say it — in spite of the hankering I feel after the old love with its brashness and cocky self assurance. "Three hundred and twenty-five thousand words of text running eight hundred pages, concluding with a full word list and an index. A thoroughly scientific treatise on the development of American-English, it is at the same time an extremely diverting piece of reading, full of odd stuff to be found nowhere else." Very true. "There is no other book on the subject which even remotely approaches the value and scope of this one" — so says the notice on the cover.

But what a piece of genius this is, really! I feel a certain diffidence about attempting to speak of the book at all after no more than the sort of reading I have been able to give it during the last two weeks. Apart from anything else, the scholarship, the reading, the labors in compilation — there is throughout the book a spirit of history, of human aspiration toward self-realization, of love for things of the mind, of color, of people themselves in all their maddening proportions — that has permitted Mencken to maintain among a thousand lists, words, and quotations, a true style which makes the book a splendid piece of writing. It is something a man has lived with for close to a generation. I feel that I shall go on reading it for the next twenty years.

Certainly a major stroke. Only a person with the effrontery for which Mencken has been known in the years past could have undertaken it and carried it through in the face of the official neglect our language has received at the hands of those who should have known better. Acknowledged abroad, in the previous editions, for the great importance of its subject, it is incredible that the incentive being of so urgent a nature, the academic mind in America has not hailed this book with the overwhelming enthusiasm it deserves. It should be required reading in every school and college everywhere among us — especially among those who are condemned to teach us. The

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very genius of the language itself would seem to demand it. But it's still, as Bill Bullett would say, not done. Still not done.

The excuse would be, as with Shakespeare in Elizabethan times, that the language is so alive we'd rather, by far, use it than talk about it. Meanwhile, this book; to me one of the most fascinating books in the world.

Beginning with "The Two Streams of English," historically treated from the time of Captain John Smith's "Map of Virginia," 1612, it carries us up through "The Language Today" with all sorts of details, voluminous, deftly linked to support the argument. As in the earlier editions "The Period of Growth" is shown in its character of the unrelenting warfare between England and the United States over a language which had burst the bounds of a narrow world and was spreading helter-skelter over a vast new continent. To me one of the most important chapters is on "The Pronunciation of American." Here lies the secret, in the monotony of our intonation, of much that we might tell.

But the book is primarily of words, new words, slang, proper names; words having Indian, Spanish, Irish, even Chinese derivations — as if the whole of the words in the world had broken loose from books and come deluging upon us to realize themselves in a new condition, under new circumstances, to form a new language. This is, with English predominating, exactly what has taken place.

Yet, and in spite of a history of stalwarts, beginning with Noah Webster, who fought for American from the beginning, it is still far more likely that there will be a chair of our language established at Oxford than here. Not a university in America has had the astuteness, the common sense to reorganize its language departments with American at the head and English and the other languages following.

"Blatant, illogical, elate," "greeting the embarrassed gods" uproariously and matching "with Destiny for beers," our language as well as our people has gone forward getting only such recognition from others as they would render up, we may say, only at the point of the bayonet. But we have become shy in whatever native refinement we possess and not at all sure of ourselves. Mencken's present work should support us ably in a better opinion of ourselves.

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It is bred of the bone of the country itself, nurtured from its plains and streams. It is its spittin' self and under that — the rest of it. But we're still a colony as far as our badly-tutored minds are concerned. We don't quite dare, do we, to say that we have a language that is our own. Surely, we wouldn't be that vulgar. We might, we just possibly might, come to a realization of ourselves that would blast the very rules of prosody out the window.

We are the most asinine country, in many ways, that the world has ever seen. Out of sheer shyness we have subsidized the world from Vladivostok to Cairo; given billions upon billions in cash; sunk whole navies we had built; not for ourselves, mind you — but for others! our time and thought for mosquito control work — in Egypt, in the Balkans, yellow fever in Africa and Brazil, our women and their fortunes thrown away to England and France, for nothing, apparently, but shyness. But the worst thing of all is to imagine, as we still do, that we speak English. And be proud of it!

Perhaps H. L. Mencken's new edition of his famous book will help us to adulthood in ways which even he did not imagine would be the case. As my mother once said to me, "*Santa Torpesa! ora pro nobis,*" Or as she translated it, "Saint Stupidity! pray for us."

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

IMPERIAL HEARST. By Ferdinand Lundberg. Equinox, $2.75.
HEARST, LORD OF SAN SIMEON. By Oliver Carlson and Ernest Sutherland Bates. Viking, $3.00.

THE close parallel between these two books is probably due to the fact that both follow the same pattern as a reply to the "authorized biography" of Mrs. Older. All three authors evidently feel that Mrs. Older tried to whitewash Hearst and that it is, therefore, their duty to do a job of debunking, to say the least of it. They have performed their task with such gusto and detail as almost to lay themselves open to the charge of muckraking rather than debunking. After twenty years of experience of war and post-war propaganda — not to mention a close acquaintance with that subtle art as practiced by the Bolsheviks — this reviewer is forced to confess an instinctive

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dislike of any writings that have an obvious purpose, even when that purpose may be itself laudable and public-spirited. Far be it from me to deny the good intentions of any of these writers; nevertheless it is impossible not to detect a feeling of animus against the subject of their book. Mr. Lundberg, in particular, piles Pelion on Ossa throughout his three hundred and eighty-one closely-written pages in the attempt to prove that Hearst has consistently set himself to debauch the public mind for purposes of financial gain and personal advantage. He paints a picture not of a man but of a monster, cold-blooded, cruel and utterly selfish; it is the sort of book that an early Christian might have written about Nero after the tyrant's death.

Having said this much, I do not pretend to deny that Mr. Lundberg, and for that matter Messrs. Carlson and Bates also, have fully established their theses, that is to say they have so marshalled their facts to reach the most damning conclusions. Unfortunately I am not in a position to question the accuracy of the facts presented, but it must be admitted that they ring true. I could wish, however, that instead of using the current cant about Hearst's "schizophrenia" and neuroticism and inferiority complex in an attempt to explain Hearst's career and personality, these authors had taken a wider view of the circumstances which made possible and carried to wealth and eminence — or notoriety if they prefer it — such men as Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer in the United States or Milords Northcliffe and Beaverbrook in England. They fail apparently to realize that the very democracy which they desire to champion against "unscrupulous newspaper magnates" inevitably called such magnates into being by producing, through popular "Education," a vast new mass of avid but semi-literate readers incapable of understanding anything unless it was presented to them in the plainest terms and largest type or in the form of pictures and cartoons. What is more, these new millions of readers had to work for their daily bread. They were able to read but they had not learned to think. For the most part they did not ask from newspapers matter for thought or instruction. What they wanted was entertainment and excitement, and it was logical and necessary that their demand should be supplied. In the final

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instance, therefore, the sins of the yellow press, both in America and England, rest not upon the shoulders of its promoters but upon society as a whole, or as one of Hearst's opponents, Editor Edwin Lawrence Godkin of the *New York Evening Post* — whose words are quoted in both these books — wrote bitterly, "The business of the yellow press is not to promote public happiness or morality but 'to sell the papers'." Of course it was, so why blame Hearst or Pulitzer?

It must not be forgotten too that Hearst rose to power in the "era of freebooters," in the days when dog ate dog and the Devil took the hindmost, the days of Gould and Boss Croker and Carnegie and James R. Keene and Anaconda, the days of blood and gold when the Trusts were being formed and the great barons of finance, railroads and industry fought like tigers for the rich spoil that was the development of America. It was a tough period, probably the toughest America has ever known, and Hearst's inheritance had fitted him for a major role in the battle, because his father had amassed a fortune in the lawless years that followed the California Gold Rush of '49. I contend, therefore, that both books would have served a more useful social purpose — if that was their intention, as I believe it honestly was — by presenting Hearst against his proper background rather than by trying to pile up an indictment against him as an individual. In short, instead of presenting Hearst as an enigma which they attempt to solve by a mass of somewhat ill-coördinated facts and some psycho-analytic claptrap, why did not they show Hearst as he was, a capitalist, a newspaper proprietor of the old school, a man of the type of Pulitzer and Gould and Carnegie and the elder McCormick, who recognized no Queensberry rules in their contests.

True, Mr. Lundberg does give a vivid and exciting picture of the newspaper war in Chicago between Hearst and the *Tribune* in the first decade of the twentieth century, but even this he uses as fuel to fan the fire against Hearst as if the hiring of gunmen and sluggers was confined to him alone. From the harsh introduction by Professor Beard with the phrases:

> The judgment on the creator of this aggregation of wealth, terror and ambition (the Hearst Empire) will be the verdict of the American nation upon its tormentor. . . .

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> What is this judgment of contemporaries in no way fearing or beholden to William Randolph Hearst? It is that Hearst, despite all the uproar he has made and all the power he wields, is a colossal failure and now holds in his hands the dust and ashes of defeat. He will depart loved by few and respected by none whose verdict is worthy of respect. . . .
>
> It is impossible to believe that any person literate enough to read Mr. Lundberg's pages can come to any other verdict than that of ostracism and oblivion for Hearst.

to the conclusion on the penultimate page,

> There should be a Congressional inquiry into the Hearst enterprises from top to bottom lest they smash American democracy. There should also be a national law making newspaper publishers liable for falsifying and circulating falsified facts. The American press can never be made free until it is made responsible to the people.

Mr. Lundberg is attacking Hearst personally. He explains what is Hearst and how is Hearst, but he omits the most important query, "Why is Hearst?" Yet on his very last page he writes with unconscious cynicism,

> At least half of Hearts's unquestioned power over the American mentality arises from the fact that the very elements in our society which should have been busy tirelessly exposing him, year in and year out, have been silent because, in either close or distant ramification, they profited by being silent.

The joint authors of "Hearst, Lord of San Simeon" declare in their preface that

> They do not pretend to a greater "objectivity" than is to be found in a scrupulous adherence to the facts and giving credit where credit is due. Their primary interest has been in understanding rather than in condemning, but they know no way of avoiding the implications of such descriptive terms as "mendacity," "hypocrisy," "economic motivation," other than by avoiding interpretation altogether. The sole question would seem to be whether *the interpretation is borne out by the facts.* (The italics are mine.)

From this cautious beginning Messrs. Carlson and Bates proceed to a psychiatric analysis of Hearst's character that might well be the envy of Emil Ludwig or the *emigré* biographers of Adolph Hitler. Their book follows much the same

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lines as that of Mr. Lundberg, but, despite their boast of objectivity, their bias is more direct and evident. The passage on page one hundred and ninety-one,

> Hearst's tortuous and ambiguous policies during the World War bore evidence at every turn of their ignoble origin. Although in many instances supported what today is recognized to have been the wise and liberal attitude . . . his course was always guided much more by personal than by public considerations. . . . He supported the right cause from the wrong motives, and in the long run the evil motives vitiated his endeavors and rendered his assistance harmful rather than helpful to the cause he represented.

cannot conceal its venom beneath the objective mask. If further proof of this were wanted, let the reader regard the cartoon which faces the following page.

Nor is there much objectivity in the last chapter of that book, which is one of the cruellest pieces of polemic writing I have ever read. They are describing Hearst's home life in his San Simeon palace and the "rules" which he enforces upon all his guests. They write:

> The fourth and last rule is the most significant: that no one shall, under any circumstance, mention in Hearst's presence the subject of death. What more complete self-revelation could anyone give, what more open confession of neuroticism and abject spiritual bankruptcy? The hard-headed realistic journalist who for half a century has featured in his papers the most horrible crimes of murder, the blatant super-patriot who has tried again and again on the slightest pretext to force his country into war and send millions of her sons to slaughter — this man dares not face the thought that the common fate of humanity will some day touch him, too. . . . The hour inevitably approaches, swiftly or slowly, when Hearst, too, will be a departing, a departed guest. Unknowingly, all his life he has worked on behalf of death — the death of personal integrity, the death of decent journalism, the death of honest patriotism — and now ultimately death will take its own.

To me that is not objectivity nor even legitimate biography but a deliberate attempt to hammer home in the mind of the reader the hostile verdict to which the whole book has been leading; in other words, it is propaganda. In this respect, therefore, I believe that both books defeat their own object

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by over-emphasis and miss the essential point of Hearst's career. They show Hearst from his start as a young Californian of radical tendencies, albeit the inheritor of great wealth, to his finish as an old Californian of fascist tendencies, of one of the richest men in the United States, the equal and associate of Ogden Mills and the House of Morgan. Why not, then, lump the two books together — as I said, they resemble each other so closely that their conjunction would not be difficult — and entitle the result "The Evolution of a Capitalist."

WALTER DURANTY

COLLECTED POEMS. 1909–1935. By T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace, $2.50.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF T. S. ELIOT. By F. O. Matthiessen. Houghton Mifflin, $2.25.

THE importance of the new volume of collected poems by Mr. T. S. Eliot is not that it gives literatti and reviewers a convenient package to be relabelled resoundingly "the passing moods of a lost generation," or to be nailed safely shut as Anglo-Catholic, Royalist, Classicist unedibles, or to be pushed as patronizingly out of the modernistic day-coaches of the latest fair-haired boys of English poetry, as it was a few years ago drawn into the compartments of the literary aristocrats. Its importance is that it enables one to read, together, the poems — not of "a great poet of our time," or "the most influential poet of his age" (all poets worth the name are poets of their age, whether they write of their age or not, and all poets influence by making) — but of a great poet. It is a pleasure to be able to take the poems, apart from the wrappings of analysis and mystery, the confetti of praise and scorn, and read them by themselves, letting them speak their own progress, sound their own music and expand with their own breath. Any one who does so seriously and concentratedly, instead of casually or up-to-the-minutely or in bits, will, I think, find that a good part of whatever new or old prejudices he may have had against Mr. Eliot's poetry — or against his ideas — are over-balanced by respect. For here is a body of

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poetry which can speak for itself, first by the enchantment of the movement of its lines, then gradually by the meaning leaping within and between the lines to those who are willing to read with the ear and mind as well as with the eye.

If T. S. Eliot had never before published any of his poems, his volume would speak immediately and clearly as a singular record of development of both form and thought in a poet. It would speak as a record, written in several languages (as well as in the words of more than one language) of the civilization, or changes in civilization, of part of the western world. But it would speak also as the impersonal contemplation of men in relation to man and to God. The serious impersonality, "the natural wakeful life" of man's ego perceiving, is what unfolds in the space offered by this volume. It is common foundation for the glinting objective satire in "Sweeney Erect";

> Sweeney addressed full length to shave
> Broadbottomed, pink from nape to base,
> Knows the female temperament
> And wipes the suds around his face.
>
> (The lengthened shadow of a man
> Is history, said Emerson
> Who had not seen the silhouette
> Of Sweeney straddled in the sun.)

for the startling symbolism of futility in his first mature published poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and in "The Waste Land" for the lyrical tenderness of "Marina," for the solemn incantations of the choruses from "The Rock":

> Out of the sea of sound the life of music,
> Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of verbal imprecisions,
> Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken the place of thoughts and feelings,
> There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of incantation.

That beauty and that order spring out of the grown body of Mr. Eliot's best poetry. If the volume is read as a whole, it is incontrovertibly evident that Eliot is no more a Catholic writ-

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ing propaganda for his adopted religion than he was an aged eagle listening to the rasping of his own impotent wings. He is a poet writing honestly and with objectivity about the things he sees and feels and thinks, in a world of men where the need for faith is as necessary as it is difficult. His expressions of difficultly-won faith are as sincere, as impersonal, as "objectively correlative" as were his earlier expressions of despair without it. Against that impersonality the public poetry of new rebels against Mr. Eliot, with their religion of Communism, sometimes sounds as self-conscious as the disillusion analysis of Eliot's earlier disciples; against the beauty and directness of some of his latest poems, such as "Coriolan," and his drama, "Murder in the Cathedral," not, unfortunately, included in "The Collected Poems," the political poetry of some of the brilliant young men just beginning their work, seems forced.

To read Mr. Eliot's poetry is the important thing. But there is an additional intellectual pleasure to be got from reading Mr. F. O. Matthiessen's "The Achievement of T. S. Eliot." Without having read the poetry thoughtfully and all together, one might find the book dangerous — partly because it is so acute and brilliant that it might tempt one to think one has understood the poetry without having read it, and partly because it is so careful and moderate that it prevents one from making generalizations of one's own. It is a masterly analysis of Mr. Eliot's conception of poetry, of his indebtedness to the metaphysical poets, the symbolists, Mr. Ezra Pound, the whole tradition and orthodoxy of European thought and art; and of the direction of Mr. Eliot's thought. At the same time that Mr. Matthiessen takes to pieces, examines minutely and puts together soundly again the devices and symbols of the poems he considers in detail, and the technique and thought of the poet and critic he is interested in judging, he never loses sight of his chief assumption: "that the poet and the political theorist, the artist and the philosopher, though all relating integrally to the age which produces them, express that relation in different ways." This sanity prevents him from writing criticism as most of his contemporaries do: to tell how they would like poetry written, not to judge how it is written.

Mr. Matthiessen is both a scholar and a critic — a rare combination; he has not only read everything about Mr. Eliot, but

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also everything by him; and at the same time interested in answering arguments against and objections to Mr. Eliot's poetry and thought, he admits, considers carefully and judges with an admirable temperance those critical opinions current in and peculiar to the last three decades. His courteous impersonal consideration of Mr. Eliot in relation to the young poets who are carrying further some of his ideas, suggests that only in retrospect can Mr. Eliot be judged dispassionately.

The achievement of Mr. Eliot lies in the mastery of techniques and in the reconciliation of thought and feeling in poetry built with integrity around focal centers of human experience. The achievement of Mr. Matthiessen lies in the analysis of those techniques, of their varied and skillful use of conversational tones, sudden contrasts, association of ideas and use of phrases and lines from other poets, shocks of syntax, evasion and recognition of regularity of metre and rhyme; in the recognition of the poets and prose writers to whom and of the individual and social experiences to which Mr. Eliot was indebted directly and indirectly for those techniques, for his perception of the necessity of reconciling thought and feeling, and for his knowledge of the great traditional symbols that embody human experience.

But the important thing is to read, and read slowly and concentratedly and listeningly, the poems themselves — to feel and think the sting of the clever ironical early poems; the disgust at the vulgarity and cooking age stage of modern civilization in "The 1920 Poems"; the blackness and sterility of "The Waste Land" and the terrible whimpering of "The Hollow Men"; the slow turning to humility, renunciation, and peace in "Ash Wednesday"; the clear, profound simplicity and dramatic intensity of the "Ariel Poems"; the solemn beauty, the reproaches and vision and Biblical cadences of the choruses from "The Rock"; the pure abstractions of "Burnt Norton." To do so, whether or not one shares the disgust and despair, the humility, the passion to sit still, the faith in the doctrine of Original Sin, or the increasing concern for and turning to people, is to move toward what Mr. Eliot has always striven for with honesty and seriousness, a firm, impersonal "grasp of human experience."

MILDRED BOIE

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THE CONQUEST OF YUCATAN. By Frans Blom. Houghton Mifflin, $3.50.

IN "The Conquest of Yucatan" Frans Blom gives an informal, one might almost say chatty, account of the fall of an internally weakened Maya civilization before the combined forces of European sword and cross, with some backward glances over earlier and more splendid centuries. The jacket design pictures a harlequin soldier-priest, half in fustian, half in mail, who with a wink holds the cross of a sword's handle for a bowed Indian to worship. There is an established theme following Kipling's toast to adventurers who "preach in advance of the army and skirmish ahead of the church."

But Mr. Blom does not develop his story along the lines of slashing satire or sustained indignation. Rather he seems amused at times that the Indian chieftains should be naïve enough to take the Spaniards at their word and let ruses succeed. Nor does he moralize on the double tragedy of that success, scarcely even hinting that perhaps the ultimate victim in the drama of unholy brigandage, of holding hosts for hostages, of spreading slavery in the name of church and state, of awakening the high-jacking cupidity of fellow European nations, was not Yucatan and Mexico, but Spain and Europe. Yet it is now more than a century since the flag of Spain disappeared from New Spain and today we witness a recrudescence of the red man's art and the red man's capacity to create social illusions in a re-born Mexico.

It is perhaps unfortunate from an ethical point of view, and even from the point of view of the historian who would reach dispassionate conclusions, that the story of the conquest of America and other parts of the world by European nations should contain so many chapters movingly replete with courage, endurance and resourcefulness. Readers are blinded to the true import of tales where motive and practice break the laws of God and man.

Mr. Blom has written a popular book, simplified in phraseology, over-simplified in subject matter, giving undue emphasis to details and incidents which are merely picturesque. It is no easy task to interpret and describe a pre-Colombian civilization. There is a saying that to learn a new language one

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must acquire a new soul and certainly it is just as hard to learn, or teach, a new set of national ideals. In spite of many a common touch there are basic differences in resources, emotional and rational, of the red and white races. These must be taken into account when social matters are being compared and when there is a death clash. No protagonist can get very far until he has succeeded in establishing terms which the public will understand and until he presents these terms in an ample perspective which makes the effort at understanding worth while.

To me it seems that this book has too low a ceiling, public or no public. To be sure it skims over a strange landscape. But at a greater height a larger and more significant pattern in events would have been revealed. Also it seems to me the character of Montejo is left obscure, so obscure indeed that one finds no explanation to the most human element in the tale, namely the untiring faithfulness of Alonzo de Avila, himself a hotspur if there ever was one.

The chief criticism of historians will be, I think, that Mr. Blom casts little new light on Montejo's campaigns, repeating some old errors and not taking advantage of certain documentary evidence such as the contemporary dispatches of Montejo and Alonzo de Avila, and the *probanza* of Blas Gonzales. Certainly it would have been wise to give maps showing the routes followed even though they could not be constructed with entire precision. In northern Yucatan the evidence is quite confused especially if conformity is demanded among Spanish writers and such native accounts as the chronicles of Makan Pech, Nakuk Pech, and others. But it is hard for the reader to follow narrative without some cartographic help, especially help on the long expeditions of Alonzo de Avila, the location of several different Salamancas, of Villa Real, and so forth. The bibliography contains less than a hundred titles and omits many writers on Yucatan history including Bishop Carrillo y Ancona, and more important still the great collections of *documentos ineditos* in which important source materials can be found. Of course this sword sailing in troubled waters is all one with so-called popular writing. The meticulous historian must trim his sails, tack to avoid reefs of contention and not infrequently drop a sheet anchor in the form of a foot-note.

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The tale begins, properly enough, with the fourth voyage of Columbus. While the Admiral of the Ocean Sea did not sight Yucatan he did encounter at one of the Bay Islands off the northern coast of Honduras a group of Maya traders traveling by canoe with fine textiles and other wares. The name Maiam is given as that of a province on the mainland. Unfortunately the chronology of documents concerning this voyage is not discussed, but I seriously doubt whether the heading the "Province called Maiam or Yucatan" can be validated as of 1502. The episode of meeting the traders is, however, above dispute and the probabilities are that these traders came from Yucatan.

The next episode concerns several shipwrecked sailors who reached Cozumel Island or the nearby mainland in 1511. Certainly Geronimo de Aguilar and Gonzolo Guerrero survived, but I have always considered the story which Blom repeats, to the effect that the others were fattened and eaten to be untrue. From one passage in a native document it appears that a word meaning "fed" may have been translated "eaten." There is no supporting evidence that the Mayans were cannibals although the Spaniards were prepared by their own fables to find such monsters. Cortés did not, properly speaking, rescue Geronimo de Aguilar, instead the latter was allowed to go to Cortés without much ado as a miserable creature hardly worth his keep.

The adventures of the first expedition along the coast of Yucatan are lightly touched upon until we come to the Battle of Ciutla won by Cortés after a cavalry charge had dispersed a host of native warriors. Then the tale of Cortés is dropped, except for the succulent item of his acquisition of an Indian mistress and is not picked up again until the journey of that soldier across Yucatan in 1524. Of course the legend of the horse which Cortés abandoned at Tayasal could not be overlooked as an incident of sober history.

Now come several chapters devoted to Montejo's campaigns, the narrative being overly concerned with Spanish strategems and Maya credulity. It covers the period between 1527 and 1541 when Merida was founded amid the ruins of an ancient Mayan city. To be sure there was the War of the Tribute of Wax in 1546 and revolts in later years. The Itzas of Tayasol

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retained independence for more than 150 years after northern Yucatan had been pacified and its inhabitants divided among the *conquistadores*. Until recent times Bacalar has been a theatre of bloody drama.

Of course the Spanish Conquest caught the Mayas at cultural ebb, with their stone-built cities mostly abandoned after civil war and Mexican inroads. Perhaps introduced diseases were a powerful factor in the capitulation, but the odds of steel swords against brown bodies, not to mention terrifying horses and death thrown from arquebuses, were as overwhelming as poison gas against the Abyssians. We may speculate that perhaps the Mayas would have regained a civilized status if left alone. The seeds of science and art were vital in their books and might have germinated new monuments. There had been some recovery along the East Coast, witness Tulum, but it appears that trouble threatened from the Aztecs.

The Bloms account of the customs of the Mayas in the sixteenth century is mostly drawn from Bishop Ganda with special attention being paid to Gaspar Antonio Chi as the first native capable of writing a one-sided account of Maya history favoring the Xiu dynasty. On the whole this makes interesting reading.

References to more ancient times are not so successful. Blom uses the short chronology with the misleading statement that it is universally accepted. Of course it is not universally accepted and in five years no new arguments have been adduced in its favor on the side of astronomy. Instead Dr. Ludendorff has presented astonishing and ample proofs for the longer chronology which makes the dates on ancient monuments nearly two hundred and sixty years older than the ones which Blom uses in the captions of his plates. The episode of Hunac Ceel is placed by him in 1441. But in the Maya Chronicles it is clearly stated to belong to the end of the twelfth century.

I have noted several rather glaring errors of fact. On page twenty, we read "the present political divisions of the Maya area are in the States of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Quintana Roo. . . ." But the territory of Quintana Roo was permanently divided between Campeche and Yucatan several years ago.

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A few lines below:

> Why do we not take advantage of our accumulated fund of human experience? Ten thousand years and more of human experience lie back of us. Should we not teach that archaeology and history are the same thing? History and archaeology should present facts upon which we can build graphs of past human experience, in order to prepare ourselves for the future.
>
> In the soil of the Americas lie chapters of ancient history as thrilling and as important as the chapters which have been excavated around the shores of the Mediterranean. Slowly our knowledge is growing and slowly we present-day Americans are beginning to realize that we shall enrich our own culture by studying the book of knowledge which lies hidden below our soil.

HERBERT J. SPINDEN

BURNING CITY. By Stephen Vincent Benét. Farrar and Rinehart, $2.00.

IN THE closing passages of his great narrative poem, "John Brown's Body," Stephen Vincent Benét, set down very richly an elegy for a dying era:

> Bury the south together with this man,
> Bury the bygone south,
> Bury the minstrel with the honey mouth,
> Bury the broadsword virtues of the clan. . . .
>
> And with these things bury the purple dream
> Of the America we have not been,
> The tropic empire, seeking the warm sea,
> The last foray of aristocracy
> Based not on dollars or initiative
> Or any blood for what the blood was worth,
> But on a certain code, a manner of birth,
> A certain manner of knowing how to live.

He then blocked out the future:

> Out of his body grows the revolving steel,
> Out of his body grows the spinning wheel,
> Made up of wheels, the new, mechanic birth. . . .
> The great metallic beast.

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Next he stated an attitude:

> If you at last must have a word to say,
> Say neither in their way,
> "It is a deadly magic and accursed,"
> Nor "It is blest," but only, "It is here."

That, however, was eight years ago. Now, celebrating for the first time the great metallic beast of modern civilization, he has used the poetic license of going back on his own advice. Indeed, he shouts as loudly as possible that the magic is black magic, that it is deadly in the extreme, and that it is thoroughly accursed. The liberal dreamer at seventeen, of five men and Pompey; the sensuous celebrant, at twenty-two, of the silver beauty of sheer woman in Greek Helen; the romantic realist, at twenty-nine, of a colorful American past — is now, at thirty-eight, a sort of God's angry man himself. He has become a revolutionist even though he does not know it, and even though, I suspect, by the odd irony that governs human thinking, he will vote for Duce Roosevelt. I contend that this fact is as worthy of remark as is the high quality and versatility of the fine writing that calls it to our attention. For since poetry is an expression of what, for want of a more exact word, we call a man's soul, the state of a man's soul is of some importance when we consider his poetry.

The book is divided into three sections. The first of these might accurately be called "Complaint against My Time," and the second "Sleep without Aspirin." The middle section is an "experiment in autobiography." This happens to contain some of the weakest poems in the collection, but it has also some of the most delightful ones. "Girl Child," "Sparrow," "For City Spring," and "Complaint of Body, the Ass, against His Rider, the Soul" are not only to be read, but perhaps also to be learned by heart. "Thanks" is only less important because less universal, while if there is a lithograph in blank verse better than "For City Lovers," it has not come this way.

The last section is betwixt and between. The first nightmare about the steel-eating termites and New York turning tropical, and the last one about the revolt of the mechanical devices, are what H. G. Wells might have written were he a poet,

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though the writing is better. But the second one shows Mr. Benét's favorite terror. In it, after the first angel has told of all the ways by which man might have been saved, a second angel, "snouted for gas masks," appears and speaks as follows:

You will not be saved by General Motors or the pre-fabricated house.
You will not be saved by dialectic materialism or the Lambeth Conference.
You will not be saved by Vitamin D or the expanding universe.
In fact, you will not be saved."
Then he showed his hand:
In his hand was a woven wire basket, full of seeds, small and metallic and shining like the seeds of portulacas;
When he sowed them, the green vine withered and the smoke and the armies sprang up.

But it is the first section that is the most able, the most moving, the most significant, and the most important. It opens with the magnificent "Lines to be Left in a Cornerstone," which seems to this reader not only the finest poem about this city (New York) which he has ever seen but the finest about any city at all. Mr. Benét speaks of the buildings "that had skeletons like a man, and nerves of wire in their bodies." He probes down to these skeletons and into these nerves. There is nothing superficial, or which can be quoted without spoiling the effect. It is a Titian portrait, or a Rembrandt, not a Sargent. Next follows a "Short Ode" flatly and effectively looking back on the futile idealism of 1917 with the clear eyes of 1936. Then the angry and vituperative "Litany for Dictatorships," a very powerful poem which it is said, "had to be written." Here the target aimed at is obviously Germany, but Mr. Benét is honest enough to speak of "those growers of bread who were sent to the ice-locked wastes," and "those denounced by their smug horrible children," which is not kind to the memory of Mahomet Lenin. Next the very vivid "Ode to the Austrian Socialists." Then "Do You Remember, Springfield?", an elegy for Vachel Lindsay which is really a complaint that the American public does not adequately support its poets. Last of all the voluminous "Ode to Walt Whitman" which begins with a very grandly drawn portrait of the dying poet and works into a fierce denunciation of the present state of affairs:

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They burn the grain in the furnace while men go hungry.
They pile the cloth of the looms while men go ragged.
We walk naked in the midst of plenty.

Thirty-seven pages, this first section, of magnificent and irate poetry, demonstrating that the great city is lonely and cruel, that savagery is rising in the world, that plain people are shot down in their dwellings (which also happened to be fortresses), that poets are not well treated, and that Walt Whitman's huge and robust optimism would be hard put, if he returned to the land of the living, to survive. These truths are self-evident. And Mr. Benét only says what many feel.

And what does he propose that we should do about it — not that this is part of his task? I think we have a suggestion of an answer in the "Ode to the Austrian Socialists":

The houses were tall and fine,
Great blocks of manstone, built by the people for people,
Not to make one man rich. When you do not build
To make one man rich, you can give people light and air,
You can have room to turn round — room after the day —
You can have books and clean water and healthy sleep,
A place for children to grow in.

In other words, just as Sinclair Lewis has suggested in "It Can't Happen Here," a gentle and benevolent socialism which will be just strong enough to keep men from taking advantage of each other and not strong enough to clamp down on individual life. But he forgets that the "shirts" also build houses for the people and even take noisy children to the Lido. And that it is just such a benevolent socialism that leads almost always to the outstretched arm or the Roman salute. And most important of all, that no law nor system can be any better than the people who live under it. As an example, Prohibition. In other words his hopes still rule his experience.

But they always have. At seventeen, long before the gabble of fascism, he had picked Pompey rather than Cæsar as the noblest Roman of them all, and made him speak as follows:

Yes, by the gods! Cæsar, the day is yours,
You rule the state — while you debauch the state.
Yet, somewhere, beyond all, there still endures
That pure Republic: and its white walls shine,
Proudly, a dream no conquests can dispel.

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> Your hosts toil uselessly: no force can take
> Those walls. Your legionaries break and break
> In vain. Ever before each bleeding line,
> It rises still, the Vision Invincible.

They could stand, and I think that he would sign them today. And the spirit that moves them, however unrealistic, is the same force that makes Mr. Benét a fine poet. For to be a fine poet it is even more important to have a "Vision Invincible" than a correct vision. When his first book was published Mr. Benét had this vision. He has it still.

THOMAS CALDECOT CHUBB

GONE WITH THE WIND. By Margaret Mitchell. Macmillan, $2.50.

SANTAYANA has said in a critical essay: "Imagination needs a soil in history, tradition, or human institutions, else its random growths are not significant enough, and like trivial melodies go immediately out of fashion." In her first novel, Miss Mitchell, a newspaper woman reared obviously in the Georgian tradition, roots her characters and plot in the soil of the Civil War and Reconstruction days of the South. After the approved grand manner of her medium, she has written a story commensurable in length and scope with "Anthony Adverse."

Scarlett O'Hara had for mother "a coast aristocrat of French descent," and for father, a self-made country squire of Irish peasant stock. The life in the red clay hills of the north Georgia county of Clayton was still new in 1861, and, by the standards of the older Southern towns, a little crude. Plantation folk here "had the vigor and alertness of country people who have spent all their lives in the open and troubled their heads very little with dull things in books." In a man, the raising of cotton, riding, shooting, dancing, the squiring of ladies and the carrying of liquor were what counted; in a woman, the management of slaves, dressing, flirtation, and child-bearing; finally, the formula of a contented land, "that of making men pleased with themselves." The theme developed by Miss Mitchell against this background is the double-edged one of Vera Brittain's "Testament of Youth" —

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war and the wash of war, seen by a woman — intertwined with the story of the struggle between the old South of the plantation culture, and the new, of raw, booming Atlanta. It is to the author's notable credit that she has been able to keep a nice balance between the plays of historical and psychological forces throughout.

From the standpoint of its principle character, the book seems primarily a spirited yarn of Scarlett's miraculous cat's lives, her hard-headed business propensities, her few friendships, her two loves for men as different as chalk and cheese, and her third and greatest love for Tara, the plantation. One sees her vividly from the first, her smouldering green eyes lusting for life through all the mutations of circumstance that life can bring. As long as she existed, she "was constitutionally unable to endure any man being in love with any woman but herself." Her complex personality, her aristocratic wishfulness and her crass motivation, stemmed from her mixed inheritance, though she passionately desired to be her mother's daughter, a great lady, she remained shanty Irish at the core. This cynicism of the earth, "a hard self-honesty at the base of her nature," forced her at last to see through herself as she had seen through the holy Confederate cause, through senseless pretentions of gentility in the face of starvation. Though, after the burning of Atlanta, Grandma Fontaine counseled her to save something to love, it was Scarlett's personal tragedy that she never saved something to fear. The code of her clan she had discarded: secretly and surely, she could live under no other.

No impoverished imagination has been at work on this crowded tapestry. Picked on it with an unusual degree of theatrical validity is a multitude of types, including at least six full portraits. Three in particular stand out: Melanie Wilkes, "the only woman who ever commanded Rhett Butler's renegade respect," who stood by Scarlett from first to last with a firmness that was "not strength — only heart": Ashley Wilkes, her husband, a dreamer and gentle aristocrat, lost with the loss of his native culture, loved and betrayed by himself and Scarlett; Rhett Butler, black sheep of a good Charleston family. It is Butler, a romantically sinister figure, who stands most powerfully in the ranks of the subsidiary

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characters, and who, transcending the part of foil, alone strides out to meet Scarlett upon her own desperate terms. By turn blockade runner, profiteer, and political careerist, at war with the plantation society that had ostracised him, and in love with the culture that Sherman had dissipated, he understood Scarlett perfectly, seeing in her toughness an adaptability that matched his own. Melanie's humanity he could only sardonically admire: in Scarlett's unprincipled gallantry, he recognized a common invulnerability and a common wound.

Others, too, rise and are carried away — Gerald O'Hara, gambler, "a tough rough, but a gentleman": Ellen, his wife, refined and full of austere placidity, concealing in retreat a proud and broken Victorian heart: Belle Watling, Butler's mistress and a hardy Madam: Mammy, wise and loyal, Tara's black nurse: Will Benteen, poor Georgia cracker and honest farmer, who, with Scarlett's money saved Tara from returning to the wilderness: Archie, ex-convict and, in the dangerous Reconstruction years, chaperon to Atlanta ladies. These and others — soldiers, carpetbaggers, bawds and slaves — meet and move into the structure of Miss Mitchell's plot; and if at times it seems that the pieces in the jigsaw-puzzle dovetail too neatly, compensation is provided in the stylized fluency with which they move to form a background for the actions of the two protagonists, Scarlett and Butler.

Most memorable are the scenes and vignettes that must provide the warp and woof of such an historical novel: the county barbecue at the beautiful Twelve Oaks plantation; the gay Confederate war bazaar; the burning and the frightful sack of Atlanta; the endless filing past ruined plantations of the ragged Confederates, beaten by lice and dysentery as much as by superior forces; the fearful reign of terror of the carpetbaggers, backed by the Freedmen's Bureau in their effort to raise the Negroes; the organization of the night-riders, and their final victory over Governor Bullock and the regime of Reconstruction. It would be a pity to give away in detail such highlights of the story as Scarlett's scene with Ashley the day of the barbecue, or her lone escape to Tara through the lines of the two armies behind a dying horse. These scenes, and a dozen others, are what prove Miss Mitchell a story teller, and a mistress of the classical technique of artful suspense. They

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should command for her a wide audience, caught by her amazing readability.

Though little indication of the research that has gone into the fashioning of "Gone With the Wind" creeps into the telling, there is an overloading of detail and lack of restraint in the presentation. Salty and caustic in spots, the book contains none of the delicately pointed satire that will be found in Miss Glasgow's work. Here, on the other hand, is little of the sentimentality that thickened the coloring of "So Red the Rose." Rather, the book is in the direct romantic tradition of the sweeping, melodramatic novel that will recur throughout our phase of civilization. As escapism, it is excellent, for it moves and excites without disconcerting by the presentation of eternal truths. For each figure in turn, the stage is lit — dextrously, and, to the casual reader, enjoyably. The faults of the book lie principally in its over-embellishment, and the somewhat mechanical quality of its irony.

While ably reflecting in her first section the gracious slave-culture that Ashley remembered as having "a glamor to it — a perfection, a symmetry like Greek art," Miss Mitchell rises to more imposing heights in the second half, depicting what Claude Bowers called "The Tragic Era." Having packed so much material into this single book, she might with authority write the novel that could be made of the readjustment immediately after the Reconstruction — an extension of the story of the conflict between the old South and the new, and a study of Atlanta rising from the terror of its ashes to be remodelled finally by southerners themselves under a changed system of society.

ELEANOR L. VAN ALEN

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN. By Wayne C. Williams. Putnam, $4.00.

AN INTELLIGENT, well-balanced biography of William Jennings Bryan in which the man could be clearly seen against the background of his time is a book which badly needs to be written in view of the prevalence of many of those ideas for which the Nebraska publicist served as a champion during his long career in public life. It would have to be done by

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someone willing and able to keep in mind Bryan's original contributions to American political thought and to differentiate these, which were actually few in number, from the ideas he inherited and from the many other ideas that were an inseparable part of the *Zeitgeist*. The use of this method would result in a book of lasting interest, which would also serve as a valuable chapter of our history.

On the other hand, no very important purpose is served by so extravagant and idolatrous a study as Wayne C. Williams's "William Jennings Bryan," which comes close in most respects to being all that a biography ought not to be, except that Mr. Williams's long acquaintance with Bryan and his family has supplied him with a considerable amount of vital material upon which later students will be forced to rely. Mr. Williams's Bryan is a cast-iron statue of a statesman in a frock coat with a halo around his head, and the book a wreath of tin flowers laid at the foot of the statue.

A horseback judgment of Bryan that comes, I believe, considerably nearer the truth than Mr. Williams's flattering portrait, is that he was an honest man with a remarkable gift for oratory and a keen sense of what was in the air, although of no particular intelligence. In other words, Bryan was a natural born politician except for his absolute integrity, a man who was never at a loss for a popular cause to champion, but who was willing to sacrifice his career rather than to yield on a point of principle.

To Mr. Williams, on the other hand, Bryan was a great statesman, a man of commanding intellect who was right on practically all important questions, and whose commanding stature will not fully be recognized until he is seen down the long perspective of history. Mr. Williams believes, for example, that Bryan's efforts on behalf of world peace will eventually bear fruit, and takes no heed of the situation in the world today. To such naïve faith one has no answer except that it is never well in forming judgments of this kind to ignore existing realities.

A careful reading of Mr. Williams's book and a considerable knowledge of Bryan's speeches and public papers leave me highly dubious of his intellect. On the contrary, he said and believed — he was a sincere man — some of the most foolish

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things any public man in our history has ever been guilty of. These are hard words, I know. Quite naturally Mr. Williams makes much of Bryan as a thinker on the question of currency, but does not refer to a quotation which appears in Samuel Eliot Morison's "The Oxford History of the United States," and which is both a genuine sample of Bryan's thinking as an economist and a portrait of the simple, good man: "Any man with a good heart can write a good finance bill." Nor does Mr. Williams refer to Bryan's statement during the early days of the World War that if this country were in danger a million men would spring to arms over night. I mention this especially because one of the most striking things about Bryan — perhaps it would be better to say the most striking thing — is that he never learned anything from experience; better say, he never learned anything.

He went to the Spanish-American War and had a first-rate chance in the camp at Jacksonville, Florida, to see there what a lack of preparedness meant, but the lesson never touched him. Mr. Williams himself says early in the book that all the causes for which Bryan fought so hard and so consistently were his at the very outset of his career, and one might add that his stand at Dayton in the Scopes case was obviously predetermined by his early upbringing. A comparison in the book between Bryan and Lincoln strikes me as peculiarly inept for the reason that Lincoln could and did learn, whereas whatever Bryan was at the day of his death, he was when his ability as a speaker launched him upon his tempestuous political career. He enjoyed a closed mind, inflexible principles, and the ability to make money — a pretty good formula for a satisfactory life.

Bryan's simple goodness and his great kindness and patience would have to be stressed by anyone who wished to do him justice, but where a better biographer would gladly admit his excellent qualities while balancing them against his equally obvious faults, Mr. Williams tries to explain away the faults, too, which is a mistake. The evidence, for example, that Bryan was a glutton from childhood, when he went about with his pockets stuffed with bread, and that he had an inordinate greed for money, the natural result of his Calvinistic upbringing, is too strong to be dismissed as invention. The

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appetite of the man was abnormal, and he did make all the money he could without too much regard for taste in the making. At the latter game he was sometimes quite undignified, as in the instance of the Florida boom, but you would not think so to read Mr. Williams's glowing apology.

Another interesting test of Bryan's mental qualities may be seen, I think, in his attitude toward woman suffrage, of which he was an early and staunch champion. The logic of his position was simple and personal, for he had the good fortune to marry young and well — Mrs. Bryan was certainly not quite as good a writer as Mr. Williams says, but she was just as certainly a woman of many admirable qualities — and so, when he took his stand on the matter of the ballot for women, he explained that he did not wish any privilege for himself that was denied to his wife. One cannot quarrel with so noble an attitude, and yet it is less the conclusion of a thoughtful statesman than of a loving husband.

As for Bryan's renowned championship of Free Silver, which like all his other important issues was purely western in its primary value, Mr. Williams is hardly enough of an economist himself to prove anything except that a great many people have come around of late to Bryan's way of thinking. I believe this proves only that Bryan realized there was something wrong with the world in his day, and that he thought something could be done about it by tampering with the currency, which is just what our own financial leaders think. It is not at all a new delusion, and I prefer to believe that economists now agree with Bryan because they don't know any more than he did. I doubt myself if Bryan would have agreed to a complete repudiation of government contracts such as occurred when we went off gold. Although his championship of the common people might have led him that far, he would probably not have seen the ultimate moral results of such a breach of contract.

Switching to another phase of Bryan's career, while I am willing to agree that in all probability Bryan was right in his stand on neutrality, and in particular in his stand against Americans traveling on passenger ships of belligerent countries except on their own responsibility, and while I admire his great courage in breaking with Wilson, I am still doubtful

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that he settled any of these grave questions by the use of his head. Rather, it was heart plus early environment that made him do what he did. And I say again that without a complete understanding of this early environment and of the United States in the 'nineties, the days of the Populist movement, no true measure of Bryan can be taken.

Mr. Williams either lacks this knowledge or considers it of less importance that I do. Bryan himself once said to Mark Sullivan that he was a child of his times, and that it was perfectly natural for him to champion many of the causes for which he was famous during his lifetime; he did not even claim originality. I also found Mr. Williams either ignorant of many things going on in the world today or so eager to praise Bryan that he seemed willing to ignore existing realities. The following comment on Bryan's peace activities may serve as an indication of what I mean:

> His greatest vindication came in that hour when the mightiest military nation in history by one thunderbolt sought to impose its imperialistic will by force upon an unsuspecting world; and in four years of savage warfare there was hammered out upon the iron anvil of war the eternal doctrines that shall forever destroy the imperialistic principles in the life of man and nations.

This is the kind of oratorical writing that will sacrifice anything for the sake of a rounded period. Imperialism dead? Ask Il Duce, or perhaps Haile Selassie would be the one to interview.

As a further example of Mr. Williams's deaf, dumb and blind worship of Bryan I can cite nothing more striking than his treatment of the Scopes trial at Dayton, Tennessee. There is no doubt that Bryan was sincere when he helped to make this country the laughing stock of the civilized world, and no doubt, either, that as usual he had done no thinking, but was still clinging to his early upbringing. His consistent orthodoxy in religion and morals was extremely useful to him throughout his career, and had the additional advantage of being, as I have said, entirely sincere.

A psychological biographer would have seized upon a paragraph from a prospectus of a tour of the Holy Land upon which Bryan was about to embark when he felt called upon

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to go to Dayton instead, but Mr. Williams, although he quotes it on page four hundred and fifty-nine, overlooks its potential significance. Bryan was to have addressed his fellow-pilgrims from Mars Hill and all the other places sacred to Christians, including Gethsemane! As editor of various southern newspapers, I used to hear Bryan spoken of frequently as "the greatest man to walk the earth since Jesus Christ"; and I wondered as I read of the proposed pilgrimage if he might not have developed a Messianic complex at the end; born reformers so often do. It is certain that he thought of himself at Dayton as the single-handed champion of the Christian faith, and this in itself does not argue very well for his humility.

Mr. Williams's book is five hundred and sixteen pages long, including a full index, and contains a great deal of valuable and useful material. But the point of view is completely lacking in intelligence or discrimination, the style is atrocious, and the proofreading, or perhaps the errors were in the manuscript, is shocking. Tolstoy's home appears as "Yasmaya," Gandhi is usually mentioned as Ghandi, Henry P. Davidson, the late Morgan partner, appears as S. P. Davidson, and so on ad infinitum.

Mr. Williams's book is convincing evidence that first-hand knowledge plus adoration do not make a good biography.

HERSCHEL BRICKELL

LISTEN FOR A LONESOME DRUM. By Carl Carmer. Farrar and Rhinehart, $2.50.

TO A dweller in New York City, such as the present reviewer, Mr. Carmer's York State seems an alien and foreign place. Even though we have some knowledge and experience of the country and people within a radius of fifty miles of the city his descriptions of "upstate" touch no realities that we may recognize from personal experience. Even the name York State sounds unfamiliar to our ears. But perhaps it is for this reason that we feel the eerie enchantment of his lonesome drum and appreciate the full and satisfying stories he tells. We are too apt to think that the South has a monopoly on legend and tradition and that the negroes are the only ones to see h'ants and hear unearthly voices. We forget our own

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Indian and pioneer tradition, or as Mr. Carmer hints, perhaps we metropolis dwellers have forfeited our right to claim it. But in these pages these forces come to life and the charm of an old tradition is revived.

There is plenty of meat in these legends and stories of York State and they provide a clarifying view of the shady borderline between fact and fancy. Starting with the premise that a strange influence pervades the ether of this state, he goes on to show how this spirit has manifested itself in the different sections of the country. Here are tales of the remnants of the Indian tribe, the Senacas, who live in the western reserve "On the Turtle's Back," and who retain their old rituals and have preserved in an almost miraculous manner, the aura of their ancient legends. Further east he travels through the lovely, spreading Genesee valley that is so English in contour and in the county tradition that it preserves. But it is the central plain that proves most interesting. Here that strange spirit was most potent, and influenced the men and women of this section to proclaim aloud the faith and spirit that animated them. Their stories are breath-taking and fabulous, yet they are fact, and fact well-substantiated by the living descendents of the original protagonists. The stories of the Shakers, the Jemimakins, the Oneida Community, the Millerites, who ardently expected the end of the world in 1843, the Harrisites, the Mormons, and the Spiritualists will hold your interest to the last word, though you may be surprised to learn that they all originated in York State. Mr. Carmer tells their stories with little embroidery, indeed the facts are so amazing that no embroidery is needed to make them read like fiction; but he tells these tales deftly, and there is food for afterthought in these recitals of what men and women have done under the guise of, or for the sake of, spiritual revelation. Many of these people lived and died and sacrificed the sweetest rights of life in response to the demands of their Voices. Among these groups the first eugenic experiment in this country was made and the first, and probably only sincere attempt, at communistic government, and both of these among those who called themselves Oneida Ltd. They exist to this day and still manufacture Community Plate. We defy anyone to start this part of the book and not become instantly absorbed in it.

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But the author has power with words as well as with facts, and when he writes of days full of clouds that drift over tilted fields and green summits, and of sunny elms and straight-edged slopes, he creates a vision of loveliness that will be recognized by those who know this country and envied by those who do not. It is in the retelling of old legends and the weaving of modern spells of beauty that Mr. Carmer is at his best and it is easy to see that he writes these parts with love. His reporting of present day fact and phenomena is apt to be merely that, reporting, and seems a bit out of line with the rest of the book. He arouses us to little enthusiasm by his reiterations that "Rochester is a sane city," and further on "Rochester is a temperate city," and again "Buffalo is a city of contrasts," but his conscientious and ironic report of Chautauqua, that quiet, lovely spot where the elderly and middle-aged acquire an emasculated adult education and enjoy the antiquated rituals of the 'Nineties, as well as his experience with the young people at Bernarr McFadden's Physical Culture Hotel, read as authentic folklore of today. They compare rather unfavorably with the rituals of the Indians or the inspired antics of the Shakers or the followers of the Publick Universal Friend — ambiguous and intriguing name! — so long passed away.

His irony is veiled but still apparent as he describes the would-be British squires of the Genesee huntin' country, though the writing in this section seems merely second-hand reporting. However the note about the old Covenanter who pointed out the new Ford star in the west with the explanation that 'Mr. Ford puts it out every night and reels it in a little after eleven' has the stamp of truth. Although he knew it to be Venus, Mr. Carmer agreed, thinking sadly how the Gods have changed since first men looked into the night sky. And indeed in these pages the new Gods seem rather shabby and mean contrasted with those of the more heroic past. But the story of the visit to the Adirondacks in midwinter, the exciting few days spent in the woods with the lumberjacks, and the rides up and down precipitous slopes in the fearsome snow-mobile, form a really stirring part of the modern scene, as do the tales of modern horse thieves and mountaineers. Here is a fine mixture of old and new, murdered victims returning from the dead to startle the Fox sisters and bring to life the Spirit-

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ualists; frail and lovely ladies who lived hidden lives in these wild fastnesses, brought there by noble or adventurous lovers in exile; ascetics giving up all for an ideal; and the ghostly drummer boy who may be heard Spring and Fall through all the valleys of the State. Mr. Carmer has substantiated his claim to have set down in this conglomeration much that is meaningful. This may not deserve to be called a great, or even a very important book, but it is Americana of value and will be read with interest by many and surely with enthusiasm and affection by York Staters.

ILAH NIEHOFF

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA, 1883–1935. By Irving Kolodin. Oxford University Press, $3.75.

BY RECORDING the fortunes of opera in New York City during the past half century, Mr. Kolodin has added an ironical chapter to the history of American culture. The drab, ugly building with which they are chiefly identified is sometimes described as a temple of art. At various times, and for brief periods, it has actually merited that description. But more accurately, it is a monument of our gilded age. Into it were built the social ideals, financial acumen, and esthetic indifference of a generation which profoundly affected the course of American life. The art to which it was incidentally dedicated has survived, to struggle with the consequences.

Erection of the Metropolitan Opera House was the outcome of motives which had nothing whatever to do with art. It was an episode in the transfer of financial and social ascendancy from New York's Knickerbocker families to the new capitalists whose stupendous fortunes derived from railways, mines, and industry. The Academy of Music, which for thirty years had offered opera to the cultivated and fashionable, was in all respects but one entirely adequate to this service. It merely lacked enough boxes to accommodate both the old oligarchy and the new wealth. Since the possession of an opera box was the current symbol of membership in fashionable society, the visible index of affluence, those in the Academy were closely held. The new millionaires, disgruntled by their inability to obtain any, resolved to build their own opera house, in-

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corporating therein as many boxes as demand might conceivably suggest. The Metropolitan was the fruit of that prodigal intention. As originally designed, it gratified the sponsors by providing three tiers of boxes, besides twelve on the parquet level. But even the most optimistic census of socially ambitious millionaires failed to reveal one hundred and twenty who were likely to pay for the privilege of simultaneously occupying boxes at four performances each week. One tier was therefore promptly eliminated. Costs of construction having exceeded estimates, the plans were further modified by the addition of two revenue-producing wings, containing apartments. The financial acumen thus architecturally commemorated was resorted to, some ten years later, in formulating terms for the production of opera which obtain to this day.

The house was inaugurated in 1883 by a financially disastrous season which featured Christine Nilsson, for many years a favorite of audiences at the Academy. Its repertory resembled that of the older house and indicated what, but for the deficit, New York might have continued to receive as operatic fare. But the extreme repugnance of the directors to losses resulted in an innovation which was to endure for seven years, with incalculable effects upon American musical taste. A project for German opera submitted by Dr. Damrosch possessed, in their opinion, the unique advantage of cheapness and was for that reason adopted. Thus an auditorium built to fulfill social ambition served to familiarize the American public with opera in its most serious and exacting form, as exemplified in the music-dramas of Richard Wagner. To the unfortunate boxholders the prospect of unmitigated Wagner was torture, but the alternative of a yearly assessment was even less tolerable. They endured the discomforts of parsimony with chagrin, while an enthusiastic but socially ineligible public proclaimed them benefactors. Eventually they rebelled, ejected Wagner with scant ceremony, and settled down to the anticipatory enjoyment of "Faust" and the hurdy-gurdy school.

Their contentment proved brief. After one season remarkable for its introduction of new and great singers, fire destroyed the auditorium. A subsequent reorganization reduced the shareholders from seventy-five to thirty-five. These accepted absolute ownership of the parterre boxes in lieu of

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rental for their property, and bound themselves to transfer no stock except to persons approved by the directorate. To the later, and especially to the current, vicissitudes of opera in New York these two provisions contributed materially. But during two decades when the Metropolitan flourished as the setting for a fashionable pageant, they constituted its directors the final arbiters of social acceptability. That situation terminated some twenty-five years ago. With the invention of other and more agreeable opportunities for conspicuous expenditure, the traditional social importance of opera diminished. Today occupancy of a box has slight social significance, and a majority of them are largely sub-rented. The interest of "society" in the Metropolitan as a rendez-vous has almost evaporated, and its interest in opera as an art, always negligible, has by no means increased. But its financial stake in the enterprise continues, and opera, which now draws its patronage from the middle class, is attached to an institution functionally long obsolete.

From the point of view of opera as an art, the record of the Metropolitan scarcely justifies the encomiums lavished upon it during recent appeals for financial assistance from the general public. Its traditional glories seem rather to have been the result of accident, or pure good fortune, than of any intelligent discrimination on the part of those who controlled its destinies. The proprietors of the Metropolitan have regarded any season as artistically successful which closed with a profit or, at worst, without a loss. The character and merit of the productions have concerned them little, and they have seldom conceived themselves to be either trustees of a public interest or patrons of an art requiring subsidy. In such circumstances, the Metropolitan has been a temple of art only incidentally and infrequently, and it has become so only when expediency has coincided with high artistic ideals. The German seasons under Damrosch and Stanton illustrate one such fortunate conjunction. The period between 1891 and 1903, during which Maurice Grau assembled what was perhaps the most splendid galaxy of singers in operatic history, was obviously another. With significant but rare exceptions, the succeeding years have manifested no comparable achievements.

Yet comparable achievement always remains a possibility,

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and opera, purely as an art, can flourish quite independently of the social spectacle to which it has often been an incidental accompaniment. The Hammerstein seasons, now a remote memory, testify to the beginning of a transition toward popular support. We have come a long way since Philip Hone, recording in his diary the opening of New York's first accredited opera house, expressed his doubts whether the "splendid and refined amusement" would meet with adequate encouragement.

The value of Mr. Kolodin's comprehensive history to the student of our culture should be obvious. It surveys, in the fortunes of a single art, one of the most significant manifestations of social change that has occurred in American life. The Metropolitan Opera House is an enduring memorial to the pretensions, the apotheosis, and the decline of an extraordinary generation. A nostalgic passion for grandeur infected it. Collecting pictures which it seldom appreciated, building mansions which it inhabited only briefly, and listening to music which it rarely enjoyed were equally casual expressions of its determination to acquire the symbols of power. Opera served it well by providing a legitimate occasion for display. Today its heirs, reluctant to forfeit their inherited financial investment in an establishment no longer fashionable, are appealing for assistance to a once despised public. By thus transferring their responsibilities to the public, and to a foundation consecrated to the public good, they are probably hastening the inevitable democratization of an art.

LLOYD MORRIS

FROM A SURGEON'S JOURNAL. 1915–1918. By Harvey Cushing. Little, Brown, $5.00.

MUCH has been written about the World War but never a book like this one, drawn from the daily journal of Dr. Harvey Cushing, the brain surgeon. Few American officers saw so much of the war on so many fronts as did Dr. Cushing and few men, in or out of the army, could have written of their experiences with the epic simplicity that he has. In 1915 Dr. Cushing was serving as one of the leaders of the Harvard unit attached to the French army at the American Ambulance

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hospital in Neuilly. In 1916 he returned to Boston to organize the Brigham Hospital unit and as Base Hospital number five this was among the first American units to go to France in 1917. Remaining in France until the war was over he saw it from many vantage points.

In reading the early entries in Dr. Cushing's journal, particularly the chapter bearing the title "The Battle of Boston Common," one cannot help being aroused by the woeful inadequacy of our preparation for participation in a war. Although casualties are inevitable, our facilities to meet this phase of war were still slumbering back in the days of the junket with Spain. Whatever one may think of preparedness in the military sense, it is tragic to think that a world which looks upon war as inevitable finds national leaders slow to appreciate the importance of developing an highly integrated and efficient medical service ready to cope with the immediate and most terrible consequences of warfare — human suffering beyond imagination. One can at least be thankful that there are such men as Dr. Cushing, and pray that we, as a nation, may learn something from them.

Dr. Cushing was in no particular sense a soldier and his training as a surgeon, and a great one, had not fitted him for the routine of military discipline, nor did it permit him to succumb to the pettiness of the military. A great surgeon, he saw the war first through the eyes of the man of medicine. But he was more than that, for he could see himself, the army, life about him, and occasionally the war itself, objectively. A good reporter, gifted with a camera eye, few things escaped his notice and as he records his daily impressions, writing in tents, on trains, between operations, or in an ambulance, he transmutes the spell of the moment into words. No person capable of being stirred can read Dr. Cushing's journal without experiencing a quickening of almost every human emotion, from the pride and exaltation which comes with work well done down to the disillusion and despair born when one is overwhelmed by a sense of the futility and the absurdity of so much of what man does.

Sailing from the United States again in May, 1917, Dr. Cushing and Base five were attached to the B.E.F. at Camiers and immediately set to work on the British casualties. Through-

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out the summer and early fall of 1917, behind the lines of Messines Ridge and Passchendaele, he served the British Fifth Army Area. These summer offensives were costly and the 140,000 casualties that occurred in a scant four months meant that hospital staffs and their facilities were taxed to the breaking point. Always working, frequently under enemy fire, Dr. Cushing and his operating team performed from six to ten major operations in a day, any one of which would have been considered a good day's work in ordinary practice. The confusion, the destruction and the indescribable suffering which war brought with it, seemed to fire Dr. Cushing with the zeal to throw his whole powers into the titanic task which confronted him and every surgeon at the front. Masterpieces of surgery performed under the most trying conditions, with but limited equipment, are described in a laconic sentence, yet a complete picture is suggested to which more words could add nothing.

Because Dr. Cushing was able to see the war not only in the terms of the poor individual whose shrapnel-torn brain he happened to be working on, but also in the larger perspective, one is never lost in the minutiae which inevitably must form the marrow of a daily journal. Yet it is the monetary flashes that Dr. Cushing gives of life in the wake of the demoralization which is war that grip the reader. The detachment and the calmness of the surgeon, all the more impressive because one feels the tenseness which lies underneath, characterize all his writing, even when the material invites more passionate expression. So dramatic an incident as his futile effort to save the life of Revere, the son of his friend, Sir William Osler, wounded near Dosinghem is told in a few brief, but powerful sentences. The story of this incident ends with these words, "The Padre recited the usual service — the bugler gave the 'Last Post' — and we went about our duties." These fragments echo the anguish that must have been crying out for expression.

After months of feverish and nerve destroying work Dr. Cushing was relieved of his duties with the British and ordered to Neufchateau as senior consultant in the American Neurological survey. The man of action found himself ill at ease in the role of the administrative officer. Yet to leave a man of his

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knowledge and ability to serve as one member of an operating team at the front was too much of a waste at a time when intelligent leadership was sorely needed. Like many another he finds himself turned suddenly into an administrator at the moment when he was perhaps in a position to be of greatest service simply in the routine practice of his profession.

What one finds, or fails to find, in Dr. Cushing's book depends, as is often the case, on what one brings to the reading of the book. Some may see in it the horrible futility of war and regret that the critical man seems too often to be submerged in the doctor, forgetting that what we have to deal with here is not a ledger but a very human, daily journal. Others may see in it the exaltation and the superhuman capacities which war often brings out in men. There is also much in this book to quicken the memory of those who lived through the war, but regardless of one's connection with the period of the war it lays down a challenge to the mind.

Without regard to the special interest that the surgeon, the soldier, or the man in public life may bring to this book it is one distinctly for the average man who can abandon himself to its fascination. Dr. Cushing served to the end of the war, having witnessed the toll it exacted from man, from the days when poison gas was first used against the allies at Ypres in 1915 down to the final grim struggles at St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne. The story of these years is told in quick strokes with words as sensitive and certain as the hand and brain that in yielding the scalpel have made Dr. Cushing one of the great surgeons of modern time. He left the army a colonel, but he has lived to achieve honor beyond title and rank.

R. H. ISHAM

OSCAR WILDE DISCOVERS AMERICA. By Lloyd Lewis and Justin Smith. Harcourt, Brace, $4.50.

THIS book is a wonderful collection of disorganized facts which, given another hero around whom to collect, might easily have become organic and presented us with a picture of social America in 1882. As it is, they are certain to amuse us: and if they do not turn into social history before our eyes, we must not blame them. We must blame Oscar Wilde.

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Oscar Wilde arrived in America early in 1882, to lecture on the Beautiful and its relation to the toil of the proletariat and the interior of the middle class home. He was twenty-eight and owned to twenty-six. He was six foot three in height, stooped, had a bad skin, long hair, damp hands, a method of walking which suggested the voluptuary, extraordinary eyes, and a faculty for charming anybody whom he wanted to charm.

On first thoughts, there really seems no reason why he should not have come to America: as the apostle of good taste, he would simply be traveling from one home of bad taste to another. Bad taste in Kansas should have been just as amenable to persuasion as bad taste in Kensington; in fact, it should have been more amenable. Wilde had twisted the æsthetics of Pater and the political economy of Ruskin into a plea which has not been unfairly summarized as the plea to "exist beautifully": and what hope had such a plea in the England of 1882? Would Queen Victoria have consented to exist beautifully, would Mr. Carlyle, would Mr. Chadband; would the London docker or the Lancashire weaver or Mr. Wilde himself have consented? In a negative sense, however, Victorian bad taste was very convenient: you knew where it was, it had a shape and a voice. You kicked it in the paunch and it answered you in *Punch*. It was part of an orderly economic process; it was in no hurry; and, since its defenders were able men, you attacked with circumspection. But America was in a hurry, its bad taste was as various and violent as the Old Man of the Sea, and it had, then as now, the unfortunate capacity for drawing out the worst in its visiting lecturers. Oscar Wilde should not have gone to America.

Like so many men who are not Anglo-Saxon and who make a success in London, he was something of a mountebank; he was in the tradition of D'Orsay and Disraeli. There is certainly nothing reprehensible about a man who has a touch of the mountebank — witness the character of Bernard Shaw: but there is something rather dangerous about his coming to America with a message — witness Mr. Shaw's single visit to this country. The mountebank is apt to take control. Mr. Wilde was preceded by *Patience* (in which Gilbert had lampooned him as the poet Bunthorne), he was promoted, like *Patience*, by D'Oyley Carte; he arrived, prepared to look as

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much like Bunthorne as possible, to lecture in knee-breeches and black silk stockings. The notion that he was being used as an advertisement for *Patience* must have occurred to him at least as forcibly as it occurs to us: he must have been prepared for rudeness and ridicule. But he also knew that he was going to create a good deal of a stir, and retire with more money than he possessed on arrival.

It is here that one feels bound to disagree with the title of Messrs. Lewis and Smith's book: Mr. Wilde was not by nature a discoverer. The purpose of his existence was to be discovered, and to achieve that kind of discovery he would go to any lengths. Not that he was insincere. He sincerely desired the housewives of America to drape their marble mantels with velvet, he was sincerely opposed to stuffed birds and bad china. He wanted to expatiate on the virtues of brown wall-paper with a geometrical design, on bric-a-brac, on road-making under Ruskin. He hoped that the workers of America might unchain themselves through the medium of the arts and crafts. He longed to abolish the hat-rack. But he also wanted money and he wanted notoriety, and so it was as Bunthorne that he preached the beautiful life.

I do not think that readers of this book will get a living portrait of America in 1882; firstly because the subject is too large and disheveled, and secondly because, so long as Oscar Wilde was in their midst, Americans were on their guard — at least to the extent of not being themselves. He embarrassed them; they were either too loud or too silent in his presence, and there was the uncomfortable thought that if you attacked him he might go you one better. The behavior, therefore, was mostly confined to the newspapers; and once he had passed through New York and Philadelphia with some success and had been lionized by almost the best society, he was confronted in the *Washington Post* with a pictorial comparison between himself and the wild man of Borneo, with something written underneath it about Darwin and the missing link. This was the kind of bad taste which no amount of lecturing could dispel. When the undergraduates of Harvard invaded one of his lectures in knee-breeches and sunflowers, he quelled them with politeness: he could not quell the *Post*. Besides, his lectures were not calculated to promote the cause of beauty. He

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read from a manuscript in a monotonous voice, and to a country with a tradition of oratory he was intolerable. As he passes uneasily from city to city, you begin to wonder whether anything is going to happen; when is this America of 1882 going to come alive? It is not the authors' fault. They have been diligent and neat, they have ransacked and arranged; but you begin to wish that they had been following somebody else around — Ingersoll perhaps, before whose incredible voice America burst into tears quite naturally. Wilde could never put America off its guard like that; after listening to his voice it simply went home and burst into print.

I doubt if a living picture can ever be got from the newspapers. The authors produce a fascinating series of incidents which, like today's headlines, fade from your memory the moment that you cease to read them. I have gone through this book twice, and each time with pleasure, but I cannot possibly tell from it what people were like in Chicago or St. Paul or St. Louis or Kansas or Cincinnati. Were they rude, crude, intrusive; did they spit too much, did they wash too little? Had they a culture? Did they know what to do with their forks and their servants? Could you have taught them interior decorating? The answer can be either yes or no: for when a man who thinks his audiences barbarian meets audiences which think him a freak, the results are apt to be inconclusive, vague, unreal. The only impression one gets is an impression of the middle classes in a hurry, and of poor Wilde in a hurry too. Perhaps there were occasions — at somebody's dinner table, in the corner of a crowded reception, or when he drank a stag party under the table — when he lived up to his reputation for wit: but, if there were, they have not been recorded.

But there is one moment when something happens to this inconclusive record, when the authors' imagination gets the better of them, and Wilde and America come briefly and beautifully to life. He went to Denver. Even today Denver is the first city at which (if you travel there via Chicago from the East) you begin to wonder why America ever went into the World War. It is completely American. In 1882 it was outrageously so; long before Wilde's arrival, the ladies of the red-light district had been parading the streets with sunflowers. In Leadville, whither he had ascended at the instance

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of the fabulous Tabor, Wilde besought the miners to make beautiful objects out of gold thread: he said he wished Cellini could have been with him, but he was dead, and somebody inquired "Who shot him?". But when he came to drink with and out-drink the miners he forgot all about gold thread and began to like them for what they were. And they liked him. He was always able to charm people if he liked them; and in the home of Tabor and Eugene Field and Doc Baggs and Judge Sopris and Minnie Clifford, he and America move out of Americana and into history.

Otherwise, the book is Americana — that is, a series of effects without any causes. Wilde did not discover America and America did not discover Wilde: the result of their encounter was to make each a little more enigmatic than before, in this book at any rate. If you are looking for amusement you will feel, as I do, an enormous gratitude to the authors for their diligence and vivacity. But don't read them for instruction.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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Contributors' Column

Cal Lewis ("Labor Bewitched") is a free-lance journalist who has contributed articles to the "Encyclopaedia Britannica," various magazines, and hundreds of newspapers throughout the country.

R. L. Duffus ("The Museum Takes off its High Hat") says that he has written on practically every subject except the care and feeding of children. A journalist of wide experience, he is at present a staff contributor to the *New York Times*, having in the past published five novels.

Harold Fleming ("Can We Control Credit") appears in the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW for the first time as a commentator on the economics of inflation, a subject on which he is known as an authority.

Ethel Wooddell ("Plenty of Salt") is a native North Carolinian who feels that the mountain people have been badly portrayed in contemporary fiction. She is eager to correct such false impressions, and "Plenty of Salt" is her first published attempt to do so.

Gerard Piel and John Lee (" . . . To Thy Jubilee Throng") are Harvard undergraduates contemplating journalistic careers. Piel is a literary editor of the *Harvard Advocate* and in his summers has worked on the *Brooklyn Eagle* and the *Grand Forks Herald*. John Lee, before going to Harvard, spent two years on the daily paper at Williams.

Joseph Auslander ("The City") has been well known among American poets since "Sunrise Trumpets" (1924). In this issue, the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW is very glad to welcome him as Poetry Editor.

Elizabeth Bohm ("A Group of Poems") is the first poet to be published under the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW's new policy which allows for a number of poems by the same author in each issue. She has had poetry in the *Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and various poetry magazines.

Genevieve Parkhurst ("Children Wanted") has contributed to many women's magazines; her article on maternal mortality in *Good Housekeeping* in 1934 caused a change in New York City laws governing the hospitalization of women; another article, called "Is Feminism Dead?", caused a national controversy, and led to a Roosevelt promise to reconsider the laws relating to the employment of women.

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John Mason Brown ("The Unreality of Realism") is dramatic critic for the *New York Post* and author, among other works of theatrical comment, of "Letters from Greenroom Ghosts." The article which appears here will be published this fall by W. W. Norton in a new book, "The Art of Playgoing."

Audrey Wurdemann ("Bergamot") is a more recent comer to the field of verse. She was married to Joseph Auslander in 1933. In 1935, her volume of poems, "Bright Ambush," won the Pulitzer Award.

Charles Martin ("That Little Tune of Mine") is a young Cajun just graduated from a Louisiana college and working on a newspaper there. He has a novel appearing this fall, "Unequal to Song," and for the coming year has a scholarship at the University of Missouri.

Hoffman Nickerson ("The Tragic Failure of Pacifism") saw service with the General Staff of the A.E.F. from March to December 1918, and in the following months with the Interallied Armistice Commission. He has published, among other books and articles, "The Inquisition," and "The Turning Point of the Revolution."

Clemence Dane ("American Fairy-Tale") is well and welcomely known in this country and England for her magazine articles, her book, "Broome Stages," and her play of two seasons past, "Come of Age."

Katherine Garrison Chapin ("Greek Column") is in private life Mrs. Francis Biddle, of Philadelphia. Her first volume of poems, "Outside of the World," appeared six years ago; and her next, "Time Has No Shadow," will be published by Dodd Mead & Co. this fall.

Charles J. McGuirk ("H' Y, Commissioner!") has written newspaper stories of a political complexion since his graduation from the University of Missouri in 1912. Since 1920, he has also published numerous articles in magazines.

John Erskine ("What is Contemporary Poetry?") is sufficiently celebrated as teacher (English Prose Composition: Columbia University), author and critic ("The Private Life of Helen of Troy," "Jack in the Beanstalk," "The Delight of Great Books"), and President of the Juilliard School of Music.

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